

Advanced Policy Analysis

Implementing the Youth-Related Components of the Workforce Investment Act in California: A Survey of Local Youth Councils

Conducted for the California Workforce Investment Board
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By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) commissioned this survey of California's Local Youth Councils (LYCs) in January 2005. The purpose is to provide a snapshot of California's workforce investment system as it pertains to youth, including the ways in which LYCs have implemented the youth-related components of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), their successes in doing so and the challenges they currently face. This study was designed to serve as a realistic basis for future research, and to help CWIB develop policies that will improve youth workforce development programs and services statewide.

This report finds that California's LYCs are:

- in general, established, empowered, organized, active and effective representatives of the voices of youth within their communities;
- pleased with the local control granted to them under WIA and have used it to design a patchwork of youth service delivery systems that are unique to the needs and resources within their local areas; and
- beginning to embrace the more expansive role envisioned for them by the Department of Labor and the State. They are focused increasingly on finding ways to develop and integrate existing youth services in their community, thereby expanding their capacity to provide workforce development and training services to all youth.

Nevertheless, a small number of California's LYCs are significantly less active, less organized and less empowered than their counterparts around the State. They are struggling with basic organizational issues and likely would benefit from additional guidance and assistance.

This report also identifies five key barriers that either impede the delivery of services in local areas or threaten the recent achievements that many of California's LYCs have realized in recent years. These barriers include:

- A lack of guidance, assistance and leadership from the State Youth Council;
- Diminishing funding;
- Burdensome and overly restrictive eligibility requirements;
- Spending requirements that increasingly emphasize the most at-risk youth; and
- Challenges with current performance measures.

The new performance measures slated to go into effect this summer and proposed easing up on eligibility requirements potentially will help to reduce or remove some of these barriers, but they are likely to create short term transition challenges for LYCs. These same legislative proposals, however, may only make things worse for LYCs by increasing the emphasis placed on the most at-risk youth thus further taxing their resources that are already stretched thin. Declining funding continues to be a problem and threatens the expanding mission of California's LYCs. What LYCs would like to see is more involvement and support by the State either through the State Board, the State Youth Council, or the Youth Council Institute. Specifically, they would like to see increased advocacy, more information and assistance in overcoming barriers, and more leadership and coordination of policy at the state level. LYCs likely would benefit from more attention and communication with State-level organizations as well more focused information and assistance.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

June 2005 marks the completion of the fifth year in the implementation of the Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in California. The California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) - the entity responsible for overseeing WIA policy and planning for the state –is subsequently beginning to assess the progress of WIA implementation statewide and is beginning to plan for the next 5 years. To this end, CWIB has commissioned projects designed to evaluate and assess the implementation of WIA in California. This project was commissioned in January 2005 to provide a snapshot of California’s workforce investment system as it pertains to youth.

The purpose of this project is to offer a depiction of the choices California’s Local Youth Councils (LYCs) have made in implementing WIA, the current youth services delivery system that is the result, and some of the key obstacles LYCs face. It also offers a discussion of these obstacles and some suggestions as to the direction the state and/or LYCs might want to pursue in overcoming them, based upon the findings in the literature and the opinions expressed by LYCs themselves. This report is neither a full evaluation of California’s LYCs nor an analysis of the available options and with recommendations as to how the State should resolve various problems. The findings in this report are intended to serve as a realistic basis for future efforts to improve youth workforce development activities and to serve as the foundation for more focused future research.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

In addition to consolidating many of the fragmented federal workforce development and job training programs and placing new emphasis on performance, accountability and coordination of services, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 established new guidelines and a single funding stream designed to help low income youth become better prepared to enter the nation’s workforce. Foremost, WIA mandates that each local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) – the entity responsible for overseeing workforce development and job training activities in each of California’s 50 local workforce investment areas – establish a subgroup known as the Youth Council. LYCs typically view their role as advisers to the WIB on issues pertaining to youth in that local area and as the entity responsible for recommending service providers with which the WIB should contract for the provision of youth-related services as specified under WIA.

More specifically, WIA charges LYCs with four broad duties (WIA, 1998). They are to:

- Develop portions of the WIB’s local plan that relate to youth;
- Recommend to the WIB eligible providers of youth services to be awarded contracts or grants on a competitive basis;
- Conduct oversight of those providers contracted to provide youth services; and
- Coordinate youth activities as authorized by WIA.

WIA also specifies certain eligibility requirements, program elements to be provided and performance measures to be met. Yet, it devolves significant authority to LYCs to determine the needs of youth in their local areas and to design the system of services that best meets those needs, given the resources available.

In order to ensure that California's LYCs were able to fulfill their role, in 2001, CWIB established a (non-required) State Youth Council and contracted with the California Workforce Association and New Ways to Work, both of which jointly operate the Youth Council Institute (YCi). The State Youth Council was charged with the task of providing policy guidance to LYCs, promoting coordination among California's youth programs and addressing other issues concerning youth. YCi was hired to provide technical assistance and training for LYCs. Together they developed, adopted and encourage LYCs to adopt the "All Youth – One System" principles, a system for building a more comprehensive, integrated and inclusive youth development system.

These activities are taking place against an ever-shifting legislative landscape. Local areas have seen considerable reductions in funding despite WIA only being in its fifth year of implementation (Lemp and Campbell, 2005). As of July, LYCs will begin to employ new, more streamlined performance measures (U.S. DOL, 2005). WIA also is overdue for reauthorization by Congress; several reauthorization bills were introduced but failed to pass during the last two years (NYEC, 2005). Two WIA reauthorization proposals – HR27 and S9 – are under consideration in the Congress. In addition, the President introduced some workforce development changes through his most recent budget proposal. Some changes that appeared in past, failed reauthorization language re-appeared in current proposals, including changes in the requirements for eligibility, shifting required spending to emphasize harder-to-serve, more at-risk youth, and the possible elimination of the mandate that local WIBs maintain LYCs. These changes either will or would affect youth workforce investment services throughout California making an accurate assessment of California's LYCs all the more vital.

METHODOLOGY

The findings in this report are based upon the results of two survey projects. The bulk of the data was gathered through interviews conducted by the author with the Chairpersons and staff of 18 LYCs. A small portion of the data was gathered as part of a web-based survey administered by YCi to all 50 of California's LYCs.

The initial interview protocol was a list of 46 open and close-ended questions organized around 7 themes (Appendix 1). It was generated from the findings of a literature review and influenced by the protocol used in Lemp and Campbell's (2005) survey of local WIB Executive Directors in California (part of their multi-part evaluation of California's workforce investment system). The literature reviewed included: the text of WIA itself; guidebooks and reference manuals designed to help state and local officials build better LYCs; and national studies, detailing the ways in which LYCs have implemented WIA as well as the challenges they have faced in doing so.

Twenty LYCs were contacted and followed up regarding interviews. The 18 LYCs that agreed to participate were emailed the interview protocol in advance of their scheduled interview. This approach was chosen to give respondents time to research relevant documentation and discuss answers with other key staff and Youth Council members as appropriate.

The 18 interviews took place between March 9, 2005 and April 1, 2005 and averaged about one hour in length. The interviews were conducted via telephone to ensure that interviews included

LYCs from around the state, that interviews could be conducted with a limited budget, and that open-ended questions could be sufficiently pursued. Each interview included at least one WIB staff person, typically the person responsible for overseeing youth-related work. Twelve interviews also included a LYC chairperson or equivalent. Thirty-three respondents participated in total. With the permission of respondents, interviews were taped and transcribed and in some instances, transcriptions were supplemented with information emailed by respondents.

As it turned out, seven of the 46 interview questions (#s 4-6 and 8-11) were identical to questions developed by YCi as part of a survey it planned to administer during the same period of time as the interviews. Through conversations with YCi, it was agreed that it would ask these questions as part of its survey and share the data with this project. This approach was mutually agreed to because it minimized the administrative burden on LYCs and offered the opportunity to gather data for these questions from the full population California's LYCs.

YCi subsequently conducted their survey via the web beginning March 7, 2005. It was administered to all 50 LYCs, with the data referenced in this report based on the 36 responses (72%) available as of April 15, 2005. One important decision was whether to use responses from all participating LYCs or only for those 18 LYCs that were interviewed. It turned out that only 14 of the 18 (78%) interviewed LYCs participated in YCi's survey. Since this response rate (i.e. 78%) was comparable to the response rate for the entire survey (i.e. 72%) and neither group of responses was preferable on the basis of other kinds of bias (e.g. self-selection), the decision was made to use all 36 responses.

Answers to open-ended questions were coded and analyzed using qualitative methods and answers to close-ended questions were totaled and analyzed in Excel. The detailed results for all questions can be found in Appendix 2.

SITE SELECTION FOR INTERVIEWS

The budgetary and time constraints of this project limited the number of interviews to 20. While a larger sample arguable is necessary to ensure that findings from these interviews can be generalized to the population of all 50 of California's LYCs, significant steps were taken to ensure the diversity the sample. The 20 LYC selected were subject to a thorough vetting process.

Nine LYCs were selected because the local areas in which they resided had already been vetted as case-study locations by the research team conducting the WIA Implementation evaluation.

These local areas had been reviewed so that they were diverse with regard to:

- Geographic location and economic conditions (e.g., distinct regions within the state);
- Size (e.g., population base, amount of WIA allocation); and
- To the degree possible, diversity with regard to other local area characteristics (e.g., mix of government, private and non-profit providers; single county, multi-county, or sub-county scope)

The additional 11 LYCs were chosen based upon similar criteria with the primary emphasis on geographic diversity. A particular effort was made to balance the sample with local areas from

the San Francisco and LA metropolitan regions, coastal and inland regions, and north, central and southern regions of the state. Key stakeholders, including the UC-Davis research team hired to conduct the WIA implementation evaluation, the Youth Council Institute and CWIB were consulted to ensure that the entire sample of LYCs were geographically diverse and met other criteria such as perceived activity levels.

The fact that the LYCs from only 18 of the 20 selected local areas participated in the interviews had relatively little effect on the diversity of the sample. The non-participating areas were balanced with regard to geographic diversity and activity levels.

The LYCs that participated are part of the following Workforce Investment Boards:

Alameda County WIB
City of Los Angeles WIB
Carson/Lomita/Torrance Workforce Investment Network
Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board
Fresno County WIB
Humboldt County WIB
Merced County WIB
Monterey County Office for Employment Training
Mother Lode WIB
Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC)
Oakland WIB
Sacramento WIB (SETA)
San Bernardino County WIB
San Diego Workforce Partnership
Santa Barbara County WIB
Sonoma County WIB
Tulare County WIB, Inc.
Verdugo WIB Consortium

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Local Youth Council Activity and Organization

This report finds that, in general, California's LYCs appear to be active, empowered, organized, and effective representatives of the voices of youth within their communities. These findings are consistent with what other studies have found to be true of LYCs nationwide (Allen et al., 2002; Kazis, 2001; GAO, 2002; GAO, 2004; Macro et al., 2003; SPR, 2004). California's LYCs also follow many of the promising practices regarding activity, organization and membership that are reviewed in the literature (Callahan and Massy, 2000; Ferber and Pittman, 2002; NYEC, 2002-03; Nisenfeld, 2002; Pines and Callahan, 2000). Some LYCs did fall short of certain membership requirements, but they appear to be no different in this regard than other LYCs around the country. A few LYCs, however, are struggling; respondents report being considerably less active, less empowered and less well organized than their counterparts across the State. These LYCs may benefit from and appreciate receiving additional guidance and assistance from the State.

Local Youth Councils are Active

California's LYCs are, in general, active. According to Lemp and Campbell (2005), 40 out of 48 (83.3%) WIB Executive Directors in California described their LYCs as either active or very active. While EDs may tend to favor their own organizations, all of them did not. One LYC (2.1%) in that survey was described by the ED as fairly active, 3 were (6.3%) described as not very active and 4 (8.3%) were described as not at all active.

The findings for this project corroborate these claims. According to respondents, 74% of all LYC members have attended 2 of the last 3 meetings, with some respondents reporting that as many as 100% of their members have done so (YCi).¹ These results are comparable, if not slightly better than national findings. The GAO (2002), for example, found that slightly more than half of LYCs had most or all of their members typically attending meetings. And while neither WIA nor the promising practices literature recommends how often LYCs should meet, it is worth noting that half (47.2%) meet monthly, while 22.2% meet every other month and 27.2% met quarterly (YCi).

Local Youth Councils are Empowered

LYCs, in general, are also empowered by their WIBs, where empowered is defined as:

- having **authority** as indicated by a WIB's willingness to accept the recommendations of its LYC (Allen et al., 2002) and
- being **well integrated**, or involved as indicated by communication, shared membership, etc. between the WIB and the LYC (Allen et al., 2002).

¹ Since findings for this report were the results of both interviews conducted by the author with a select group of Youth Councils (n=18) and a web-based survey administered by the Youth Council Institute (YCi) of Youth Councils statewide (n=36), all findings will be cited either in the text itself or parenthetically referring to the sources as "interviews" or "YCi."

Interviews revealed that WIBs always or almost always accepted their LYC's recommendations, indicating that LYCs have authority (Interviews). LYCs were also well integrated with their WIBs. Most LYCs (80.5%), for example, have at least one council member who sits on the WIB's executive committee (YCi). Also, respondents for 13 LYCs (72.2%) described their WIB as very involved or somewhat involved in their LYCs decision-making and recommendation process, where "involved" was characterized in terms of shared membership and the degree of communication between the LYC and the WIB (Interviews). While respondents for three LYCs (16.7%) described themselves as autonomous from their WIB, they indicated that their LYCs, while autonomous, were given ample authority to do their work (Interviews).

Youth Council Size is Consistent with Other Findings

At present, California's LYCs range in size from 11 to 30 members, with an average of 19 members (YCi). These results are consistent with other research. YCi conducted a survey in 2003, which found that LYCs had between 2 and 36 members, with an average of 21 members. This 2003 survey, however, had a higher response rate (92% vs. 72%) than the 2005 survey, which likely explains the difference in range of response rates. The present findings are also consistent with the GAO's findings (2002) that 70% of LYCs had between 11 and 25 members, with an average of 20 members.

Local Youth Councils are Organized to Support Leadership

WIA does not mandate any particular sub-division for LYCs, but as Kazis (2001) explains, sub-groups can help to reduce LYC meeting times and help members be more efficient, especially if the LYC is large or is having difficulty keeping members focused and engaged. Data reveals that 70% of California's LYCs with larger than average memberships sub-divide, creating either sub-committees or workgroups organized around particular projects (YCi). Overall, two-thirds of California's LYCs engage in such subdivision (YCi).

The literature also specifically references the importance of creating an executive committee that can help the LYC organize work, motivate others and facilitate meetings (Heldrich, 2000; Nisenfeld, 2002) or ensure that leadership skills are effectively passed from one chairperson to the next (Kazis, 2001). While only 5.6% of California LYCs surveyed use executive committees, many (61.1%) have chosen to use workgroups organized around projects rather than a more hierarchical structure of an executive committee with other sub-committees (YCi). Also, interviews revealed that 3 LYCs (16.7%) used co-chairs to help transition leadership. Besides, leadership turnover has been relatively low, with no LYCs of those interviewed having had more than 4 different chairs since inception and most (66.7%) having had only 1 or 2 (including co-chairs).

Local Youth Councils Have Diverse Membership

WIA specifies particular types of individuals that must sit on each LYC (see Youth Council membership textbox). This report finds that, for the most part, LYCs in California meet these membership requirements (YCi). All LYCs have both WIB members and representatives of service agencies, including juvenile justice and law enforcement agencies. The two categories in

which California's LYCs fall short are parents of eligible youth – 36% reported have none – and housing authority representatives – 25% reported having none (YCi). These shortfalls, however, are not entirely unexpected and are probably not something about which to be concerned. Besides turnover and new membership, which may result in some shortfalls, California's LYCs appear to be comparable to their counterparts around the country. The GAO (2002), for example, found that only around 56% of LYCs nationwide had all categories of members (the GAO excluded local WIB members and Job Corps representatives from their question), and that 29% of LYCs did not have parent members.

Youth Council membership must include (WIA, 1998):

- WIB members with interest or expertise in youth policy;
- representatives of youth services agencies, including juvenile justice and local law enforcement agencies;
- representatives of local public housing authorities;
- parents of WIA-eligible youth;
- former participants and representatives of organizations with experience in youth activities;
- representatives of the Job Corps, as appropriate; and
- others as assigned by the local WIB chair.

Aside from these findings, California's LYCs have diverse and successful membership in other ways.

- On average, 20% of LYC members are local WIB members with a maximum of 53% (YCi). This finding is consistent with Nisenfeld's (2002) recommendation that LYCs be comprised of no more than 50% WIB members.
- Nisenfeld (2002) also suggests that WIBs and their LYCs benefit from having members that are not just service providers. Service providers comprised only 22% of the typical LYC's membership. Including Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement representation, service providers comprise only 29% of membership (YCi).
- The GAO (2002) found that 94% of LYCs had school district personnel members. In California, 97% of LYCs had representation from educational institutions, with these members comprising 16% of total membership (YCi).
- With regard to their clients, the GAO (2002) recommends that LYCs be more responsive through recruitment of parents and members of the business community. As discussed above, some LYCs in California do not have parent members, but parents do comprise 4% of membership and go as high as 20% on some LYCs (YCi). Respondents for 12 LYCs (66.7%) discussed having business members on their LYC, and representatives of 12 LYCs (66.7%) discussed the ways in which their business sector relations were either good or improving (Interviews).
- Finally, with regard to youth themselves, the GAO (2002) found that 65% of LYCs nationwide reported having difficulty recruiting youth. Seventy-four percent of California's LYCs, however, have former or current participants, with these individuals comprising about 6% of membership, on average (YCi). Respondent for 44% of LYCs also report having other youth as members, with these youth comprising about 5% of total membership, on

average (YCi). In addition, almost all LYCs used various strategies such as focus groups, surveys, and having youth advisory committees to increase youth involvement and to solicit youth input (YCi).

A Few Local Youth Councils are Struggling

A few LYCs struggle to be as active, organized, empowered as their counterparts around the State. Of course, this finding is uninteresting to the extent that these LYCs just represent one end of the spectrum; there will always be variation in the degree to which LYCs are organized. The ability of these LYCs, however, to organize and stay active is sufficiently limited that the disparity between them and other LYCs statewide is noteworthy. Examples of such disparity include:

- Whereas LYCs had, on average, 74% of their members attend 2 of their last 3 meetings, three LYCs had fewer than 40% of their members do so and one LYC had as few as 23% of its members do so (YCi).
- While over two-thirds (69.4%) of LYCs meet monthly or every other month and over a quarter (27.2%) meet quarterly, one LYC (2.7%) meets only semi-annually (YCi).
- While most LYCs (80.5%) had at least one LYC member who sat on the WIB's executive committee, 7 LYCs (19.4%) had no such member (YCi).
- One LYC (5.6%) did not have a chairperson (Interviews).
- Compared to other LYCs that had both substantial authority and were often well integrated with their WIB, two LYCs (11.1%) were described by respondents as uninvolved with their WIB (Interviews). These LYCs were disempowered and had little interaction with their WIB either by design of the WIB or due to lack of interest on the part of members.
- Despite most respondents providing at least some account of their LYCs' relationship with business, respondents for two LYCs (11.1%) described their relationships with business as non-existent (Interviews).

In most cases, respondents for these LYCs are aware of the challenges facing them. In some cases, the challenges are unique to these local areas. In other cases, as is discussed in the "Barriers" section of this report, the challenges are shared by many other LYCs. Whatever the challenge, the respondents for these LYCs also were keenly aware of a lack of support and assistance in overcoming the challenges they faced. To the extent the State wishes to shrink the disparity between LYCs in order to ensure that LYCs are able to move ahead together, additional assistance and support to these struggling LYCs could be beneficial and likely would be appreciated. Without it, there seems to be strong chance that services to youth in these local areas may get left behind as statewide changes occur.

Mission and Direction

Overall, LYCs are taking on a more expansive role, seeking to serve more than just WIA-eligible youth and working to do more than just oversee WIA programs and services in their area. They have also taken steps to play out this role such as developing their mission/vision statements, completing resource-mapping and gap analysis projects and doing strategic planning. A few LYCs are struggling to complete some of these steps, but in many cases, they are aware of and working to overcome these challenges. In some cases, the challenges are widespread and pose significant barriers to a number of LYCs. These challenges are addressed in the “Barriers” section of this report.

Local Youth Councils Increasingly Take on a More Expansive Role

LYCs within California face two significant choices in defining their role. First, a LYC must decide whether to serve only WIA-eligible youth or a broader client base, up to and including all youth. Second, a LYC must decide whether only to develop and oversee youth programs or take on a more expansive role, leveraging additional funds and/or developing a more coordinated system of youth services. Arguably, serving a broader range of youth will require moving into the more expansive organizational role since serving a broader range of youth likely would require additional funding and/or connections with organizations that can serve non-WIA eligible youth. With either choice, the decision is whether to do the minimum required under WIA or to take on a more expansive role as is encouraged by the Department of Labor and the State, through the State Youth Council and YCi (U.S. DOL, 2001; YCi, 2003).

The State Youth Council and YCi have captured both aspects of this more expansive role in their “All Youth – One System” principles, which they encourage LYCs to adopt (YCi, 2003). The AYOS principles are a set of assessment tools and system building exercises designed to help LYCs build a more coordinated system of services targeting all youth within their local areas (YCi, 2003).

One measure, then, as to how LYCs see their role is to determine the extent to which they have adopted the AYOS principles. Interviews revealed that 15 LYCs (83.3%) officially adopted the AYOS principles, although a closer examination reveals that only nine (50%) had both adopted them and found them useful. Three (16.7%) LYCs were struggling to put them into practice and three (16.7%) adopted the AYOS principles officially, but haven’t put them into practice (Interviews). For these six LYCs, the obstacle was either serving all youth – because a lack of resources or an increasing emphasis on the most at-risk youth made this impossible – or that the AYOS principles had not been as helpful as they had hoped in coordinating the many services in their local area (Interviews). Three LYCs (16.7%) noted that they had not adopted the AYOS principles at all (Interviews). The reason provided by respondents was simply that putting the AYOS principles into practice had never emerged as a priority for their LYC.

Another measure of how LYCs define their role is by using YCi’s three defined roles: regulatory, coordinating and strategic. Each role is progressively more expansive with regulatory LYCs playing the more limited WIA-only role and strategic LYCs working to serve all youth by building a more coordinated and integrated youth services system (YCi, 2003). As part of YCi’s

web-based survey, LYCs were asked to address how they defined their own role based upon this model. The results show that (YCi):

- 11% of respondents saw their LYCs as regulatory
- 31% of respondents saw their LYCs as coordinating; and
- 26% of respondents saw their LYCs as strategic

Most of the other 31% of respondents described their LYCs as some combination of these three, with several indicating that they were moving away from the regulatory end of the scale towards the strategic end.

Yet another model asks respondents whether they view their LYC's role as that of an overseer of WIA-funded programs or as a catalyst for youth-related programming in the community. This question, used in the interviews, was adapted from Lemp and Campbell (2005). According to respondents:²

- 6 LYCs (33.3%) fit the catalyst role;
- 7 LYCs (38.8%) were transitioning from the role of overseer to that of catalyst; and
- 4 LYCs (22.2%) were firmly in a dual role.

Based upon these various findings, anywhere from a quarter to a half of California's LYCs see themselves as playing a more expansive (i.e. catalytic or strategic) role, and LYCs increasingly see themselves as moving in this direction. What also emerges from these findings is that while many LYCs might aspire to play a more expansive role, it is not always easy or practical to do, at least not without further funding or assistance. It's also not entirely clear which dimension of the more expansive role – all youth or a coordinated system – is the more challenging to implement. Ideally, further research could explore this question so as to help the State better tailor assistance to local areas.

Missions/Vision Statement, Goals and Values

In the interviews, respondents were also asked about their LYC's mission and/or vision statements, goals, and perceived value to the community. The answers all had considerable overlap and reflected to some degree the roles as discussed above. This is not surprising since, as Pines and Callahan (2000) discuss, a mission and/or a vision statement reflects a choice about which youth to target and how to define the purpose of the LYC in relation to those youth. Some of the frequently repeated elements of these mission/vision statements, goals, and perceived values were:

- Preparing youth to become responsible and contributing adults;
- Coordinating and streamlining youth services in the community;
- Convening key individuals in the community around youth issues;
- Identifying youth needs in the community and provide appropriate services;
- Monitoring and overseeing contracted youth service providers;
- Marketing youth workforce and youth development ideas; and
- Serving particular high-risk, high-need youth in the area.

² One Youth Council was described by respondent(s) as fulfilling neither of these roles – it serves primarily as a networking group for service providers (see “The Youth Councils Role, p. 52). This type of significant variation from the norm is indicative of a struggling Youth Council as discussed in the previous section.

Some of these elements such as “monitoring and overseeing” clearly describe a more limited role whereas others such as “coordinating and streamlining youth services” describe a more expansive role. In most cases, it is not entirely clear where these elements fall because particular types of youth were not discussed, leaving the expansiveness of the role open to interpretation.

Mixed Success with Resource-Mapping and Gap Analysis Projects

A *resource-mapping* project, as it pertains to youth, involves identifying youth service providers, the services they provide and other sources of youth services funding available in the community. A *gap analysis* project involves identifying the services for youth in the community that are missing given the needs of eligible youth (Pines and Callahan, 2000; RFP Topical Study Group, 2002-03; YCi, 2003). A completed resource mapping and/or gap analysis project, obviously, would be of value to LYCs since it would help them to build a more responsive youth services system in the community, no matter what youth they choose to serve or how extensively they choose to serve them. These projects, however, are of even more importance to LYCs who take on a more expansive role since they help to identify additional funding sources, players with which to partner so that services can be provided to non-WIA eligible youth and ways to coordinate services in the larger system.

Interviews revealed that 13 LYCs (72.2%) engaged in some form of formal resource-mapping and/or gap analysis project, with 5 LYCs (27.8%) completing both resource-mapping and gap analysis projects and 8 LYCs (44.4%) completing a resource mapping project only. Respondents of 7 LYCs (38.9%) reported that these projects were largely incomplete, cancelled or simply less complete than desired due primarily to insufficient funding (Interviews).

Local Youth Councils Have, but are Overcoming, Challenges with Strategic Planning

LYCs are charged with developing portions of the local plan as they pertain to youth (WIA, 1998). As Pines and Callahan (2000) explain, this process is not one of program planning in which goals, objectives and actions are tied to specific programs and services, rather it is a process of developing a broader set of strategies to help the community address the needs of youth.

Interviews revealed that not all LYCs have managed to so inject themselves in the local area planning process. Respondents for 14 LYCs (77.8%) had been involved in this planning process either on their own or in conjunction with their WIB or both. The other four (22.2%) either weren't sure or thought probably that their LYC had not done so. If by some chance their LYC had participated in a strategic planning process, the resulting document had long since been forgotten. All LYCs indicated, however, that they were aware of the challenges that prevent such a plan from being useful – namely making the goals attainable and not too lofty and keeping the document an active part of every meeting – and many discussed how they are learning to overcome these challenges and make planning once again a part of their organization.³

³ It's not entirely clear whether respondents' answers distinguish the 5-year strategic planning process from the tactical and/or strategic planning some LYCs participate in on an annual basis with their local WIB. To the extent that respondents conflate these two processes, it will cloud these results.

Local Area Youth Services Delivery Systems

WIA spells out three responsibilities for LYCs with regard to the provision and management of youth services (see page 2). It also defines specific services that must be provided, eligibility requirements to be followed and performance measures to be met. Yet, when it comes to designing the service delivery system, WIA devolves significant authority to local areas, allowing them to be responsive to local needs and consider the service providers and other resources available within their local area.

This report finds that the LYCs interviewed very much appreciate and value this local control and have used it to create a patchwork of youth service delivery systems across the state. But while these systems do vary from one to another, four trends emerge:

1. The mix of different types of youth service providers in California is comparable to what has been found nationwide, with slightly fewer non-profit organizations and slightly more public and for-profit organizations found in California.
2. Most local areas tend to locate youth service providers both within One-Stop centers and elsewhere in the community rather than doing one or the other.
3. Most youth service providers who contract with the WIB are required to provide all 10 service elements themselves rather than being required to build formal coalitions or only provide some of the 10 service elements.
4. Local areas are split as to whether their youth service providers primarily serve youth across categories (in-school vs. out-of-school; older vs. younger) or whether they target youth from one specific category.

In some cases, LYCs clearly were more active in choosing and/or designing these various outcomes, and in others, much of the resulting system depended upon the availability of providers, geographic considerations, etc. In either case, respondents indicated they were more or less pleased with the way things were working. To the extent that they were not, the challenges they raised are discussed in the “Barriers” section of the report.

Local Youth Councils Appreciate and Value Their Local Control

This report finds that LYCs very much value and appreciate the degree of control and flexibility they are given to design their local youth service systems. Respondents for 8 LYCs (44.4%), for instance, indicated that local control is one of the things that they like most about WIA (Interviews). Also, a common theme that respondents repeated throughout the interviews was the way in which this local control and local flexibility allowed their LYCs to listen to local needs and design systems that matched those needs (Interviews).

It is worth noting, however, that not all interview respondents seem to have used the concept of local control in precisely the same way. Some respondents, for example, discussed wanting more local control especially in regards to performance, contracting or eligibility standards they saw as barriers to service. One interpretation may be that these LYCs simply want to get rid of these regulations altogether – something that may be neither possible nor wise. Another interpretation is that these LYCs are genuinely struggling to either understand or implement these particular regulatory measures. To the extent that these particular regulations are important

and/or cannot be adjusted (i.e. more local control is not an option), more guidance and assistance from either the federal or state level may be a welcome substitute to additional local control.

Slightly Fewer Non-Profit Providers than Local Youth Councils Nationwide

There are no real surprises regarding the types of organizations that California's LYCs recommend as providers of youth services, with the exception that interviewed local areas do have slightly fewer non-profit providers and slightly more public and for-profit providers than do LYCs nationwide. Macro et al. (2003), for example, found that non-profit organizations comprised 65% of youth service provider contracts, nationwide. In California, they comprised only 52% of contracts (Interviews). Educational institutions comprised 24% of contracts both nationally and in California, while public and for-profit organizations accounted for 11% of contracts nationwide and 24% of contracts in California (Macro et al., 2003; Interviews). Of course, these differences probably matter little. As Macro et al. (2003) found, there was little discernable difference between non-profit and for-profit providers. This is good since as explained below, the choice of provider type is limited in the cases of many smaller and/or more rural areas. If there were a difference in performance, these areas would face serious challenges associated with changing their service providers.

Attracting Providers Challenges a Few Local Youth Councils

Both the GAO (2002) and SPR (2004) found that many LYCs, nationwide, reported being challenged by attracting new service providers. In the case of the GAO, 63% of LYCs reported such problems and the concentration of LYCs with such problems primarily was in rural areas. While respondents for only 6 LYCs (33.3%) reported having such a challenge, this number is not insignificant (Interviews). Half of these 6 LYCs report having too few providers in their area while the other half were challenged by getting new bidders to compete with and win contracts against established contractors. Whether these challenges result in a significant reduction in the quality of services available to youth or whether they threaten the stability of services is something to be investigated further.

Local Areas have Equal Mix of Centralized and Decentralized Providers

Even though WIA does not require that youth service providers be located or co-located in One-Stop centers, as it does for adult services, the Department of Labor encourages it (Macro et al. 2003; SPR, 2004). DOL believes that co-locating services will result in efficiency gains as providers tap into existing networks, experience and funding sources. The result, as Kazis (2001) explains, is that LYCs must decide whether to serve youth centrally, by locating or co-locating service providers within One-Stop centers, or to provide services in a decentralized manner by serving youth wherever providers are located within the community.

LYCs in California have decided to do both. While two local areas (11.1%) out of the 18 interviewed had their youth services located exclusively in the community and another two (11.1%) had their youth services located exclusively in One-Stops, 14 local areas (77.8%) had youth services located both within One-Stops and elsewhere in the community (Interviews). Of these 14 local areas:

- Ten had less than full WIA youth services within their One-Stops, ranging from referrals to nearly full services;
- Three had full or limited youth services in some One-Stops but not others; and
- One offered full youth services in One-Stops and in the community.

Overall, there is a broad spectrum of approaches ranging from offering full or nearly full services through One-Stops to offering none.

That said, California's local areas have more of their youth services located in One-Stops than local areas around the country. Both the GAO (2002) and SPR (2003) found that most local areas serve youth in a decentralized manner. The GAO (2004) found that 25% of local youth received services primarily from One-Stop centers, but that the services in question consisted mostly of referrals and information. Also, when youth were served in One-Stop centers, they typically were served alongside adults (GAO, 2002). So, nationally, to the extent that youth were served in One-Stops, services were limited or youth typically were served in the same way as adults.

California's LYCs, nevertheless, face some challenges when placing youth services within One-Stops. For 9 LYCs (50%) the challenge was making sure that One-Stops were "youth-friendly" (Interviews). As several studies discuss, programs at One-Stop centers nationwide often are adult-focused and neither enticing, nor capable of retaining youth because youth do not find them to be places they want to come (Allen et al. 2002; GAO, 2002; SPR, 2004). The result is that it is hard to attract and keep youth in programs that are located/co-located in One-Stops. A small number of local areas across the country have responded by developing "youth-only" One-Stops (GAO, 2002; Macro et al. 2003; SPR, 2004).

However, while youth-only One-Stops or youth-only areas within One-Stops may attract youth, they have the potentially adverse affect of separating youth from the world of adult employment. On its face, this might be contradictory to the stated goals of many LYCs that take it as important to prepare youth for the world of adult work (Interviews). LYCs therefore need to balance making One-Stops youth-friendly while ensuring that youth get enough exposure to the adult world of work. This fact will be an important consideration to the extent that the State wishes to further encourage the development of youth One-Stops or provide assistance to make One-Stops more youth friendly.

Other challenges faced by LYCs when locating/co-locating youth services in One-Stops include (Interviews):

- Ensuring that youth, especially poor youth or youth in rural areas are able to transport themselves to more centrally located, and less diffuse, One-Stop locations;
- Finding adequate space within already crowded One-Stops; and
- Overcoming the additional costs to service providers of moving to or opening a second office within One-Stop centers.

To the extent that the State considers it a priority that youth services be located in One-Stops rather than elsewhere in the community, some additional assistance may be necessary to help LYCs overcome these challenges.

Local Youth Councils Devolve Responsibility for the 10 Elements to Providers

Under WIA, youth must receive 10 required service elements (see the “WIA’s 10 Required Service Elements” box). The exact arrangement by which youth receive these 10 required service elements, however, is something determined within each local area. The LYC can require each provider to provide all 10 elements or monitor the overall mix and develop contracts with providers to provide particular program elements (Kazis, 2001). A third option – really a more tightly managed variation on the first – is to establish a “prime vendor,” which plays a brokering role with other providers, forming a coalition of providers all working together under a single contract (NYEC, 2002-03).

This report found that 16 LYCs (88.9%) require each contractor to provide all 10 required program elements, while the other 2 (11.1%) issue some contracts to providers who provide specific program elements only (Interviews). As such, California’s LYCs appear to have made similar choices as their counterparts nationwide, which have been found mostly to require each contractor to provide all 10 required program elements, effectively shifting decisions about how best to deliver these 10 elements to the providers themselves (GAO, 2002; Kazis, 2001; SPR, 2004).

At least 12 of the 16 LYCs that require each contractor to provide all 10 elements operate what appears to be a “prime vendor” model (Interviews). They either explicitly require vendors to build consortiums as part of the contracting process, or, more often, reported that providers work informally through partnerships or develop sub-contracts to provide various other program elements. Either way it was made clear by respondents that many providers around the state were incapable of providing all ten required program elements themselves and thus needed to work with others to carry out their contracted responsibilities (Interviews).

Overall, LYCs appear to be pleased with the systems they have implemented for the delivery of the 10 elements. Respondents for only three LYCs (16.7%) commented that their current arrangement for delivery of the 10 required program elements is less than satisfactory (Interviews). They explained that the challenge is either having too little funding to adequately ensure the provision of these elements or having too few service providers, both issues are discussed elsewhere in this report.

WIA’s 10 required service elements (WIA, 1998):

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction, leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. Alternative secondary school services, as appropriate;
3. Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. Occupational skill training;
6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period;
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months; and
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral.

Local Areas Split as to Whether Service Providers Serve All Types of Youth

Under WIA, youth are broken down into four different categories. For the purposes of spending, youth are looked at in terms of in- and out-of-school, with 30% of spending required to go towards out-of-school youth. For the purposes of performance, youth are looked at in terms of age, with older (19-21) youth being measured against different performance measures than younger (14-18) youth.⁴ Providers may specialize in serving one or another of these particular categories or provide programs to all youth.

The literature indicates that about half of providers, nationwide, tended to serve all types of youth (GAO, 2004; Macro et al., 2003). While it is true that the service providers for almost half of the interviewed LYCs serve all youth (44%), only 2 (11.1%) local areas used different providers to serve different types of youth (Interviews). In the other 8 (44.4%) local areas, whether all youth were served by the same providers varied by provider or geographic region within the local area. Furthermore, this report found that to the extent that providers specialized or were required to specialize by LYCs in particular types of youth, most did so along the in-school/out-of-school division rather than the older/younger youth (Interviews). This may be because of the minimum spending requirements on out-of-school youth.

Overall, LYCs had few complaints or faced few challenges with these arrangements. To the extent that they did, most LYCs are in the process of trying to fix them, or their complaints are addressed in the “Barriers” section below.

⁴ As of July 2005, new performance measures will go into effect that will apply to all youth regardless of age (U.S. DOL, 2005). See Barrier 5 on performance measures below for further discussion.

Barriers to Implementation

Despite the achievements of many California LYCs in implementing a diverse and locally attuned youth services delivery system, interviews revealed several substantial barriers to the work that LYCs do. These barriers include:

- A lack of guidance, assistance and leadership from the State Youth Council;
- Diminishing funding;
- Burdensome and overly restrictive eligibility requirements;
- Spending requirements that increasingly emphasize the most at-risk youth; and
- Challenges with current performance measures.

Fortunately, some of the performance measure and eligibility challenges may be resolved through upcoming changes in WIA rules and legislation. Some of these changes, however, may exacerbate challenges associated with increasing emphasis on the most at-risk youth. Either way, many of the barriers will remain. In order to overcome these barriers, most LYCs will need additional or more focused guidance and support from the State either directly, through the State Youth Council or CWIB, or indirectly, through YCi.

Barrier 1: A Lack of State Guidance, Assistance and Leadership

Respondents for 13 LYCs (72.2%) were critical, and in many cases sharply critical, of the State Youth Council (SYC) when asked to describe its role (Interviews). Comments indicated that respondents had limited communication with the SYC and were, as a result, largely uncertain about what it did. While most respondents did express their appreciation for YCi's work, they did not always understand the distinction or relationship between YCi and the SYC. In almost half of the interviews (44.4%), respondents expressed confusion about the distinction between the SYC and YCi, in some cases actually conflating the two, only later realizing their mistake. While respondents for 5 LYCs (27.8%) provided a relatively neutral description of the SYC's role, their descriptions varied from one another (Interviews). None of the respondents for these 5 LYCs volunteered positive comments with the possible exception of those that either sit on or are closely associated with individuals who sit on the SYC (Interviews).

That respondents did not raise concerns frequently about the SYC throughout their interviews the way that they did their concerns about other barriers is telling: it suggests that concerns about the SYC are not a point of active concern for them. Yet, state support of LYCs through a state youth council, while not critical for success, clearly confers benefits. The GAO (2002), for example, found that states with a state youth council supported the work of LYCs through mentoring relationships.

Also, respondents made several suggestions about what they thought the role of the SYC should be (Interviews). They suggested that it should:

- Be an advocate for and support LYCs (10 LYCs)
- Provide more information and assistance to LYCs (9 LYCs)
- Provide leadership and coordinate policy development (8 LYCs)

These suggestions reflect the general sentiment on the part of LYCs to have more State involvement and support. A few respondents were quick to point out, however, that more support and involvement does not mean more regulation (Interviews). LYCs would like the State to listen more carefully to and communicate with them and to identify and represent their needs at the state level. They also would like the State to do more to develop and provide guidance and assistance related to these particular needs. To the extent that the SYC already provides such assistance and information, better communication may be necessary since respondents in most cases did not acknowledge receiving it. To the extent that the State provides information and assistance indirectly through YCi, better communication also may be necessary given the uncertainty expressed by respondents about YCi's role relative to the SYC.

The above suggestions for what the SYC's role ought to be also may reflect a sentiment on the part of LYCs to have the State better target information and assistance where needed. For example, LYC likely would welcome information and assistance aimed at helping them overcome the other four barriers discussed below. Better targeting of assistance may also mean getting it to those LYCs that need and want it most. For example, respondents for two LYCs noted that they had little need for YCi's services at this point in their development because they had evolved past what YCi had to offer (Interviews). On the other hand, respondents for four LYCs conveyed that they would like, but were unable, to take advantage of YCi's trainings due to the cost of participation and/or absence of trainings nearby. Also, as previously discussed, a few LYCs are struggling with fundamental organizational issues. It seems that more individualized rather than generalized attention, with care paid to the needs of particular LYCs may be beneficial.

Barrier 2: Diminishing Funding

The representatives of most interviewed LYCs expressed some concern about diminishing WIA funds, with some expressing stronger feelings than others. The respondents for 9 LYCs (50%) mentioned decreases in funding as the thing they liked least about WIA; diminishing funding ranked higher than any other "most disliked" item (Interviews). Respondents also cited funding problems as a barrier to determining eligibility, serving high-risk and out-of-school youth, effectively using performance measures, providing the 10 required service elements, defining and fulfilling their missions and goals, and completing resource mapping and gap analysis projects (Interviews). The general sentiment of LYCs seems to be that declining WIA funding doesn't match the route they are being encouraged to pursue – a more expansive role serving both all and more disadvantaged youth simultaneously (Interviews).

One might think to dismiss these concerns as either an unwarranted complaint or an attempt to increase funding, but these complaints are not without a factual basis. Lemp and Campbell report (based on EDD data) that 80% of California's local workforce investment areas have seen their allocations decrease by an average of 26% since 2001. That information helps to corroborate the findings from this study in which the respondents of 15 LYCs (83.3%) reported funding cuts this past year (Interviews). Of these 15 LYCs, 9 reported that they had reduced the number of youth served and 9 reported that they had reduced staffing. The other 3 LYCs (16.7%), had not yet experienced cuts, but expected to this next year (Interviews).

One buffer that LYCs have against such reductions is their ability to tap into other sources of funding besides WIA dollars. The GAO (2002), for example, found that 50% of WIBS had non-WIA funding for youth as of 2000. Such money may come from a variety of sources. It may involve leveraging private and corporate dollars, partnering with various public and private agencies and requiring partners or contractors to coordinate with other organizations (Allen et al., 2002). Indeed, LYCs are encouraged to do all of these things by DOL and, especially by the State, as part of playing the more expansive role discussed in the mission and direction section. As Ferber and Pittman (2002) explain, these additional funds will help LYCs better implement a diverse array of services geared toward youth development principles.

There is every indication, however, that LYCs are already taking many of these steps. Interviews revealed that LYC budgets include an average of 10% non-WIA funding, and this money does not reflect the funding leveraged through public and private partnerships or what contracted service providers obtain through partnerships or from other funding sources. LYCs either don't track this information or typically do not organize it in an easily accessible form.⁵ Nevertheless, this study found that 11 LYCs (61.1%) either partner directly with and/or work through their service providers to leverage other funds and other services for youth in their area, and 12 LYCs (66.7%) either work or are in various stages of planning for projects with the business communities in their local area (Interviews).

There also are limitations to partnership building. Respondents discussed how developing new partnerships and leveraging other funds is increasingly difficult since many of the public and private organizations with which LYCs would partner are also experiencing reductions (Interviews). While it might make sense for agencies in such circumstances to partner, their instinct is often to withdraw and protect their limited funding. Furthermore, partnering with other organizations when funding is low may put LYCs at a disadvantage. As Kazis (2001) explains, funding and resources are important if LYCs are to convince others that they have the capability to partner on a project.

Assuming that funding will continue to decrease, many LYCs likely would benefit from additional technical assistance and information. For example, respondents for three LYCs (16.7%) discussed how they prioritize cutting administration over services (Interviews). Yet, Macro et al. (2003) suggest that doing so can inhibit the work of LYCs by making them too reliant upon partners and can inhibit their effectiveness in the system (Macro et al., 2003). Further, California's LYCs may need assistance on how to manage partnerships or ways to leverage additional funds in the face of declining dollars. Overall, LYCs appear to need clarification as to how they can continue fulfilling a more expansive role in the face of decreasing funding.

Barrier 3: Burdensome and Overly Restrictive Eligibility Requirements

WIA is a program focused, primarily, on very low-income individuals and individuals with specific barriers to employment (see "Barriers to Employment" box). To be determined eligible, youth must produce extensive paperwork such as birth certificates, proof of income, etc. and

⁵ A more thorough investigation of LYC contracts and budgets may reveal additional information about some of these other sources of funding that impact youth services in local areas.

their parents must be beneath a very low income ceiling (WIA, 1998). JTPA, the system prior to WIA, had similar eligibility requirements and income limits, but it also granted eligibility to youth who qualified for the free- and reduced-price school lunch program, a program with a higher income ceiling than WIA (GAO, 2002). Furthermore, JTPA allowed up to 10% of youth to be exempted from the income limits, whereas under WIA only 5% of youth can be above income limits and they must still face one or more barriers to employment. The GAO (2002) found that many LYCs, nationally, resented the stricter eligibility requirements imposed by WIA and wanted to see the return of the exemption for youth who qualify for the free- and reduced-price school lunch program, a change that has been considered in past reauthorization attempts (NYEC, 2005).

Youth with “barriers to employment” are those that are (WIA, 1998):

- school dropouts;
- basic skills deficient;
- pregnant or parenting;
- homeless or runaways;
- offenders;
- with disabilities, including learning disabilities;
- with educational attainment below the appropriate grade level;
- facing serious barriers to employment as identified by the local board.

On the whole, interviews revealed that LYCs have strong, and generally negative feelings about eligibility. This report found that:

- Respondents for 12 LYCs (66.7%) reported that their service providers found the eligibility process taxing;
- Respondents for 4 LYCs (22.2%) reported that eligibility was one of the things they disliked most about WIA; and
- Respondents for 7 LYCs (38.9%) discussed how the restrictive and challenging nature of eligibility requirements is one of the reasons why serving all youth, as is encouraged by the State, is such an appealing concept.

The data gathered for this report and other national studies reveal three reasons why LYCs and their service providers have such a strong dislike for the current eligibility requirements. First, is that current paperwork requirements are too onerous for youth. Many LYCs nationally (GAO, 2002) and the respondents for nine (50%) of California’s LYCs found that the paperwork requirements were too cumbersome for many at-risk youth who were either out of touch with the family members who would have such documentation or had family members who did not keep or have access to such records (Interviews). Second, respondents for 6 LYCs (33.3%) raised concerns about the required income levels being so low and so rigid that many otherwise needy youth close to the income requirement could not be served (Interviews). Third, SPR (2004) found that these cumbersome eligibility requirements increased administrative costs and moved resources away from services, thus leading to fewer youth served.

In looking for solutions, an obvious place to turn is to the 6 LYCs (33.3%) whose respondents reported that their service providers did not experience challenges with eligibility (Interviews). Respondents for these LYCs provided three reasons why they did not encounter problems with eligibility.

1. The local areas have so many eligible youth that sufficient enrollment is not an issue.
2. Service providers in their local are well trained in determining eligibility.

3. LYCs have additional services to which providers can refer youth who are not eligible for WIA services.

LYCs and their service providers that are grappling with these eligibility challenges may benefit from additional training and assistance. While the number of eligible youth is related to the demographics of the area, developing better methods for finding and recruiting eligible youth may benefit local areas. If LYCs had more eligible youth applying they may not be as concerned with trying to change eligibility rules. LYCs and providers also may benefit by learning about better ways to help youth gather their paperwork with an eye on more efficient systems such as incentives that encourage youth to do the work without substantial service provider involvement. It is likely that LYCs and providers would welcome other information and assistance on how to develop services further for non-eligible or close to eligible youth. Of course much of this information and assistance already is captured in the “All Youth – One System” principles. So efforts may be better geared toward helping those LYCs who have not already done so, implement the AYOS principles.

Finally, the State might play a larger role in working with local areas on ways to address eligibility issues that are specific to those local areas. Such a role might include working out where exceptions may be warranted, or perhaps adjusting performance expectations accordingly in those areas in which locating and enrolling enough eligible youth is not economically or practically feasible. In addition, it may mean advocating at the federal level for changes to be made under WIA re-authorization. Several changes designed to loosen eligibility requirements (among others was a return to using free school lunch eligibility as under JTPA), were included in past, failed, reauthorization language (NYEC, 2005).

Barrier 4: Spending Requirements That Increasingly Emphasize the Most At-Risk Youth

The Department of Labor is placing increasing emphasis on serving the most at-risk youth. As previously mentioned, WIA requires LYCs to direct a minimum of 30% of WIA funded dollars toward services for out-of-school youth (WIA, 1998). Last year, the Department of Labor announced its new vision, placing additional emphasis on particular high-risk youth categories, such as youth transitioning from the foster care system, those in the juvenile justice system, and children of incarcerated parents and migrant youth (U.S. DOL, 2004). Also, legislators have proposed significant changes to the in-school/out-of-school spending requirements during previous (but failed) reauthorization attempts. In the extreme case, proposed legislation recommended flipping current spending requirements such that LYCs would direct a minimum of 70% of funding towards out-of-school youth and a maximum of only 30% towards in-school youth (NYEC, 2005).

This report finds that California’s LYCs tend to be meeting or exceeding the minimum spending requirements for out-of-school youth. Twelve LYCs (66.6%) exceeded the 30% minimum with many of these spending in the 40-50% range, and one LYC going so far as to reverse the current in-school/out-of-school spending requirements (Interviews). That said, California’s LYCs are split as to whether they would support changes that would increase the emphasis on the most at-risk youth, with 9 LYCs (50%) against such changes (Interviews). Even some of the LYCs who already target more than the 30% minimum would object to a further increase because they’ve

already set their required spending on out-of-school youth higher in order to ensure that they capture enough out-of-school youth in the first place, given that (discussed below) they are harder, thus more expensive, to attract and retain (Interviews).

Some LYCs dislike the emphasis placed on out-of-school youth for other reasons. For nine LYCs (50%), the challenges associated with serving out-of-school youth (discussed below) are why service providers in those areas served too few youth (Interviews). Also, for two LYCs (11.1%), the out-of-school spending requirement is one of the things they liked least about WIA (Interviews).

LYCs dislike the emphasis on out-of-school and more at-risk youth or, at least, worry about it changing for two reasons. First, respondents for 8 LYCs (44.4%) cited ideological differences with WIA and DOL over the emphasis on out-of-school youth. They either believe that funds in their local areas are better spent on keeping youth in school than on the remediation of those already out or that the emphasis on out-of-school youth is inappropriate given the needs of youth in their local area (Interviews).

Also mentioned by LYCs is the extra demand that out-of-school and other high-risk youth place on service providers' limited resources thus leading to fewer youth served (Interviews). Case in point, the GAO (2004) found that out-of-school youth cost twice as much to serve as in-school youth (\$4,000 v. \$2,000). Part of why out-of-school youth cost more to serve than in-school youth is that additional efforts must be made to recruit them. They can't be located in a single place such as in schools as can in-school youth (GAO, 2004), so service provider staff have to engage in more intensive recruitment tactics (Macro et al., 2003). Out-of-school youth are also harder to retain. These youth may have jobs that make them ineligible for services (GAO, 2002), or they may prefer employment to new skills training (GAO, 2004). Interestingly, SPR (2004) found that LYCs ultimately may be able to meet their spending requirements for higher risk youth even though they are harder to serve precisely because they are more expensive to serve. Further research is needed, however, to determine whether these benefits would be enough meet the demands of a further shift in the spending requirement. Of course, either way, LYCs likely will be displeased since fewer youth are being served.

The challenge is that LYCs largely are split over whether and to what extent they would support an increase in the required spending on out-of-school youth or changes that would focus more attention on other high-risk youth categories. Obviously, the size of the increase would matter, but a moderate increase (perhaps 20%) or greater likely would raise the ire of many LYCs while not phasing those who have already adjusted their spending on out-of-school youth to or beyond that level. Less certain is how capable LYCs that have remained close to the current out-of-school minimums would be at adapting to this change. Clearly further analysis is needed, but it seems likely that a third to a half of LYCs would welcome some additional assistance and support. Much of the assistance probably would be similar to the eligibility-related assistance discussed above, including information on better ways to recruit and retain out-of-school youth or other ways to serve these youth using fewer resources, especially given the fact that funding, as previously discussed is declining. More guidance from the State would be welcome.

Barrier 5: Challenges with Current Performance Measures

WIA is a performance-based system. As such, it requires LYCs to collect data for various performance measures for all youth served with WIA dollars (see “WIA Youth Performance Measures” box). The current set of performance measures, however, is not particularly well liked. Interviews revealed that three LYCs (16.7%) indicated that the current measures were of limited use in evaluating service provider performance and respondents for another 9 LYCs (50%) indicated that they were not useful at all. Performance measures also were mentioned as one of the things that four LYCs (22.2%) liked least about WIA. The problems faced by LYCs with regard to performance measures can be grouped into three main challenges.

First, is that respondents feel that the two sets of performance measures – one for older and one for younger youth – unnecessarily complicates their work given that youth already are divided along in-school and out-of-school lines (Interviews). The most significant problem as discussed by respondents was that the additional work created by managing measures for effectively 4 different categories of youth increases the administrative burden of LYCs and takes away from their ability to serve youth.

A new set of common performance measures for all youth is scheduled to go into effect in July 2005 and may help to reduce this burden. They include (U.S. DOL, 2005):

- Placement in employment or education
- Attainment of a degree or certificate
- Literacy and numeracy gains

This new, more streamlined set of performance measures hopefully will resolve many of the issues and concerns LYCs have about overly complicated measurement systems. Unfortunately, transitioning to these new measures will take work and time. In the interim, LYCs and service providers will be operating under a dual system. The result is that this change probably will offer a long-term benefit with a short-term cost. It will be important for local areas to have access to additional information and assistance so that transitioning to the new system does not result in a reduction in performance or services.

In addition, this first challenge suggests a deeper problem: LYCs either do not appreciate the importance of these performance measures fully and/or may have difficulty understanding how they work. This kind of misunderstanding about the importance of performance measures is unfortunate because it may lead LYCs to record performance data incorrectly or not to take full advantage of the data they have collected to help improve the provision of services in their local areas. Again, the State may want to consider ways to ensure that these LYCs receive sufficient

WIA Youth Performance Measures (WIA, 1998)

Younger Youth (14-18)

- Basic Skills, including work readiness and occupational skills, attainment rate
- Secondary school Diploma or equivalent attainment rate
- Placement and retention in postsecondary
- Education, advanced training or employment

Older Youth (19-21)

- Entered into unsubsidized employment rate
- Employment retention rate at 6 months
- Increase in average earnings
- Credential rate: related to achievement in ed skills

assistance in understanding how the new performance measures operate. Most important is that LYCs use the measures rather than see them as a burden.

The second challenge is that respondents in the interviews discussed how current performance measures don't provide an accurate assessment of what really matters to their local areas. For example, using percentages to track success has serious shortcoming in local areas that serve relatively few youth (e.g. 1-2 youth either is a huge percentage change if the total served is only 4-5) and they do not allow LYCs to specify absolute increases in total numbers of clients served. Another example is that so many of the measures are long-term that they do not allow LYCs or their contractors to adapt adequately midstream.

The new performance measures, however, do not resolve most of these challenges. One possible solution may be for LYCs to design and implement their own additional interim or alternative performance measures. LYCs might wish to record shorter-term measures (GAO, 2004; NYEC, 2002-03) or have vendors complete planned performance charts recording expected results in numbers instead of percentages (Callahan and Massey, 2000). While effective, the drawback to using additional measures is they require additional planning, collecting and analysis, which translates into more time and more cost, thus fewer youth will be served. To the extent that collecting this additional data will improve services, it may be worth the effort, but many LYCs will need outside technical assistance in developing a system of alternative measures capable of measuring what they need.⁶

Third, is that respondents raised concerns about several specific performance measures (Interviews). Fortunately, two of them – challenges with the employment retention rate and increased earnings rate – will be resolved with the implementation of the new performance measures. The other two are:

The graduation rate: The measure often is recorded just before students graduate. SPR (2004) found that LYCs, nationwide, were also challenged by this measure. The problem is that WIA requires quarterly data reporting whereas schools function on semester calendars. This measure may not be resolved by the new performance measures since it still appears to rely on quarterly measurement.

Credential rate: The definition of credential is not well defined. The GAO (2002) and SPR (2004) reported that LYCs, nationwide seemed similarly uncertain about the definition of a “credential.” Moreover, to make the definition more specific makes the measures more difficult to manage and may force LYCs who have developed their own credentials to adapt. Leaving it too broad makes the system inequitable and the measurement essentially meaningless. This issue does not appear to be resolved with the new performance measures either.

While these challenges are significant, respondents for only a few LYCs mentioned them (Interviews). Based upon these interviews, challenges with specific performance measures are a

⁶ It should be noted that both numbers and percentages are included in annual State reports and that percentages are important to the extent that they provide something that resembles an outcome whereas strict numbers only produce something that resembles an output.

relatively minor problem. These particular challenges, however, are worth noting because they are indicative of the types of challenges LYCs may encounter with the new performance measures. Most likely, these challenges can be resolved through sufficient communication and guidance by the State and federal governments. The State will need to listen carefully to LYCs in order to be able to identify challenges as they emerge and develop policies and technical assistance that addresses their particular problems.

CONCLUSION

The picture that emerges of California's LYCs revolves around three key findings:

1. Active Local Youth Councils/Inactive State Youth Council

In general, California's LYCs are established, empowered, organized, active and effective representatives of the voices of youth in their community. Ironically, many LYCs perceive the SYC to be largely inactive and unsupportive of their work. While LYCs do appreciate the support and assistance provided by YCi, many are unclear about the relationship between YCi and the SYC. What LYCs would like to see is more guidance, advocacy and leadership from the State. To the extent that the State already provides such guidance and assistance, it may need to communicate better with LYCs as to what is available and as to how it is being delivered. It also may be the case that more targeted assistance is needed given the small number of LYCs that are still struggling with basic organizational issues while others simultaneously indicate that they have evolved to the point where much of the existing assistance is no longer of use to them.

2. Expanding Mission/Declining Funding

California's LYCs have begun to embrace the more expansive role envisioned for them by the Department of Labor and the State. They increasingly are focused on finding ways to develop and integrate existing youth services in their community, thereby expanding their capacity to provide workforce development and training services to all youth. Yet, this new direction is being threatened by continuous reductions in funding for WIA services. The result is fewer WIA youth served, as well as reductions in administration, which subsequently limit the ability of LYCs to reach out and conduct these more strategic and catalytic tasks.

3. Local Control/Federal Reauthorization

California's LYCs appreciate the degree of local control given to them under WIA and they have used it to design a statewide, patchwork of youth service delivery systems, unique to the needs found and services available in those local areas. Of course, even with their more expansive endeavors, LYCs still oversee and monitor programs and services. Three sizeable barriers, however, challenge the work of providers and LYCs: challenges with eligibility, the increasing emphasis on the most at-risk youth, and challenges with performance measures. Changes in federal rules going into effect this summer likely will offer some relief regarding performance measures and changes that come out of WIA reauthorization may offer relief on eligibility challenges. Both of these changes, though, will require increased assistance in the short run as LYCs transition to new systems. Reauthorization also may change spending requirements placing further emphasis on the most at-risk youth, a challenge for many LYCs given that they are already straining to meet the current requirements for serving out-of-school youth and other high-risk youth. In order to overcome these many barriers, local Youth Councils will likely require increased advocacy, information and guidance, and more leadership from the State.

FINAL REMARKS: ELIMINATING MANDATED YOUTH COUNCILS

Under WIA, each local WIB must establish a LYC (WIA, 1998). One of the more significant proposals in some of the re-authorization language is the elimination of this provision, leaving the decision about whether to have LYCs up to each State or local area. The GAO (2004) found that two-thirds of WIBs, nationwide, would keep their LYCs even if LYCs were no longer required. The more interesting question, however, is whether local WIBs would be able to maintain LYCs if their continuation was made optional. Based upon the findings of this report and considerations about whether the continuation of LYCs becomes a local or state-level decision, three scenarios emerge regarding the impact of no longer mandating LYCs. Scenarios two and three appear to be the most likely outcome. Given that both have a negative impact on youth, the continuation of LYCs is recommended.¹

Scenario 1: Youth Councils Disbanding in only the Least Active Local Areas

In this scenario, only those WIBs with the least active and most uninvolved LYCs would disband their LYCs. This change likely would have little effect on the delivery of services to California's youth because the LYCs that would disband in this scenario already have a limited role in their local areas. Contracting duties easily could be subsumed under the WIB – in some of these cases contracting is already the purview of the local WIB. Services in these areas likely would continue as before. So while the disparity between the most and least active workforce investment might become more visible due to the absence of certain LYCs, the delivery of services would change little.

Scenario 2: Financial Constraints Force Other Youth Councils to Disband

In this second, more likely, scenario, local WIBs with more active and involved LYCs who would wish to keep their LYC, might scale back the administrative support for them due to continual budget cuts coupled with the optional nature of LYCs. Such a move would reduce further the capacity of these LYCs to take on projects – coordinating programming, leveraging new funds, etc. – associated with their increasingly expansive role. This reduced capacity is likely to affect the ability of LYCs to adjust to future changes and would lead to reduction in the quality and quantity of services to youth. In some cases, it may result in the disbanding of LYCs due to lack of support.

Scenario 3: Active Disbanding of the State's Youth Councils

The third scenario is the extreme case in which some or all of California's local WIBs decide to disband their LYCs. Those WIBs that are more integrated with their LYC would be better able to absorb their LYC's responsibilities. Since the majority of LYC members are non-WIB members, however, much of the expertise and collective mindset would be lost and attention to youth issues likely would be reduced. LYCs that are more autonomous should stand a better chance at surviving in tact. Without a direct connection to the WIB or any direct support, however, many likely would disband. Those that remained would be sufficiently disempowered

¹ No recommendation or analysis of this question was specifically requested. Given that such a change could have a substantial impact upon the delivery of WIA youth services, however, it seemed important to provide analysis and some direction on this issue rather than leave implications for this research open to interpretation.

that they would no longer be able to influence youth activities as they did before reauthorization removed the mandate. In either case, California's youth likely would receive less attention, the quality of services would diminish and youth would have a weaker voice in the community.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA YOUTH COUNCILS

Survey of California Local Youth Councils

This telephone survey is designed to provide a snapshot of California's local Youth Councils based on the views of Youth Council chairpersons and staff. You are being provided with these questions in advance of the scheduled interview to allow time to prepare and to discuss responses with others as appropriate. The scheduled interview should take approximately 45-60 minutes, depending on how many comments you would like to provide. In reporting the results of this survey, responses will be aggregated, such that **your individual responses will not be revealed at any time**. Please feel comfortable in being candid about both successes and failures, so that this survey can meet the goal of providing a realistic basis for future efforts to improve youth workforce development activities. Your participation in this survey is especially appreciated.

Leadership and Organization

1. What is your title(s) and role(s) on the Youth Council? How long have you held your position?
2. What is the Chairpersons title(s) and profession outside the Youth Council?"
3. How many Chairpersons have there been since the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act in July 2000?
4. Do you have sub-committees or workgroups that support the work of the Youth Council?***
5. How often does the Youth Council meet?***
6. How many Youth Council members serve on the leadership body (executive committee) of the WIB?***
7. How would you describe your local Workforce Investment Board's level of involvement in your Youth Council's decisions/recommendations? Could you please provide one or two examples?

Membership and Connections

8. How many members do you currently have on your Youth Council?***
9. How many members are currently active (attended 2 of the last 3 meetings)?***

*** Indicates that this question was administered as part of the Youth Council Institute's web-based survey.

10. How many of the following types of members are represented on your Youth Council? (Please select actual numbers for each. Note: members may be represented by, and can be selected within one or more categories) ***

Type:	Number:
Representatives from the local WIB	
Representatives of youth service providers	
Representatives of Juvenile Justice or law enforcement	
Representatives of public housing authorities	
Parents of eligible WIA youth	
Representatives of Job Corps	
Representatives of educational institutions	
Representatives of Welfare (e.g. TANF, food stamps, etc.) agencies	
Former or current participants	
Other adults	
Other youth	

11. What strategies, other than having youth serve on your council, do you use to receive youth input to the Youth Council? ***
12. Has your Youth Council identified shared purposes or goals with other agencies or organizations in your area? If so, what are a few examples of the partnerships and the types of activities that have resulted?
13. How would you describe the relationship between the Youth Council and the business community in your area?

Mission and Direction

14. What would you say is the primary value of your Youth Council to the community?
15. Some Youth Councils see their role primarily as being a catalyst for youth related planning in the community, and others see their role primarily in terms of overseeing youth-related WIA funded programs. How would you see your Youth Council's role?
16. Has your Youth Council formulated a Mission/Vision statement? What are the most important goals of your Youth Council?
17. Has your Youth Council developed its own strategic plan or did it help to develop the youth-related strategic goals of the WIB's strategic plan?
18. Has it been difficult for the Youth Council to carry out the youth-related strategic goals approved by your WIB? Why or why not?
19. Has your Youth Council adopted the "all youth – one system" principles? Has this been useful? Why or why not?
20. Has your Youth Council completed a resource-mapping and gap analysis project? What did this project entail? Has this been useful? Why or why not?

The Service Delivery System

21. Are youth service providers in your local area located/co-located in One-Stop centers, elsewhere in the community or both? If both, are the youth services provided in One-Stop Centers different from those provided elsewhere in the community? If so, how?
22. What are some of the challenges to locating/co-located youth services in One-Stop centers in your local area?

23. What is your best estimate of the % of WIA-funded youth programs provided by the following types of service providers:

Type	% of total
Non-profit	
For-profit	
Educational institution	
Public Sector	
Other	

24. Do youth enter the service delivery system through a centralized intake process in your local area?
25. Are all 10 of WIA's specified program elements provided by each service provider or do different providers provide different program elements? Is your Youth Council pleased with the current system?
26. In your local area, are in-school and out-of-school youth served by the same or by different providers? Is your Youth Council pleased with the current system?
27. In your local area, are older and younger youth served by the same or by different providers? Is your Youth Council pleased with the current system?

Managing Service Providers

28. How would you describe the responsibilities that your Youth Council has to bidders during the Request for Proposal (RFP) process?
29. Has your Youth Council faced any challenges in soliciting bids from service providers during the RFP process?
30. Do the federal performance measures for older/younger youth provide the information you need to understand whether service providers produce results?
- *If they do:* "Are there ways these measures could be improved?"
 - *If they do not:* "In what ways has your Youth Council responded?"
31. Have you heard of specific challenges faced by service providers in your local area with regard to determining eligibility?
32. Have service providers expressed any concerns about enrolling too few youth? If so, what types of youth? What has been the response?

Resources

33. What was the Youth Council's budget in 2003-04?
34. What is your best estimate of the % of that total budget from each of these categories:

Source	% of total
WIA formula	
WIA discretionary	
Other public	
Private	
In-kind by partners	
Other ()	

35. Have reductions in WIA formula funds affected your programs? If so, how?
36. How much dedicated youth staffing does your Youth Council have access to through your WIB? Through other sources?
37. What is your best estimate of the % of WIA formula funds that you spend on:

- Older vs. younger youth:
- One-Stop vs. Community-based services:
- 38. What is your best estimate of the % of your total budget that you spent on:
 - Non WIA-eligible youth:
 - Older vs. younger youth:
 - In-school vs. out-of-school youth:
 - One-Stop vs. Community-based services:

Federal and State Connections

- 39. How would you describe the State Youth Council's current role in the system? What do you think its role should be?
- 40. How would you describe the Youth Council Institute's current role in the system? What do you think its role should be?
- 41. What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from the State Youth Council? From YCi?
- 42. Federal requirements prioritize particular types of youth. Does your Youth Council agree with these priorities? If not, which youth would you prioritize?

Summing Up

- 43. What do you like/dislike most about the current system of youth services provision?
- 44. If you could change one thing about the operation of youth-related programs and services in your area, what would it be?
- 45. Which other Youth Councils or organizations do you consider to be the best source of ideas and information for improving your programs? Why?
- 46. Is there anything we haven't asked that you feel we should know to get a better picture of your Youth Council?

APPENDIX 2: DETAILED RESPONSES TO ALL SURVEY QUESTIONS

Leadership & Organization

The Composition of the Respondents

What is your title(s) and role(s) on the Youth Council?

In total, 33 individuals, representing 18 Local Youth Councils (LYCs), participated in the telephone interviews, with anywhere from one to four individuals participating in each call. All but two of the interviews had either one or two respondents.

N	Respondents/ interview
6	1
10	2
1	3
1	4

At least one respondent in each interview identified him or herself as a WIB staff person, either the staff person primarily responsible for LYC issues (13 interviews) or the Executive Director (5 interviews).¹ Twelve interviews also included the chairperson of the LYC or the equivalent.² Two of the interviews in which a chairperson participated also included one other WIB staff person, a One-Stop administrator or both.

N	Titles/Roles on the LYC
13	WIB staff responsible to the LYC
12	Chairperson or equivalent
5	WIB Executive Director
2	Other WIB staff
1	One-Stop manager

Years Experience Leading and Supporting the Youth Council

How long have you held your position?

The WIB staff person primarily responsible for LYC functions (either a WIB staff member or ED) reported having held his or her position (or the equivalent under JTPA) for anywhere from 10 months to approximately 10 years.

¹ Four of the five Executive Directors were, themselves, the staff person primarily responsible for the LYC. The fifth ED participated because the Youth Council staff person was new to the position.

² In three interviews, the respondent was an equivalent to the chairperson, either an interim chairperson or the person deemed appropriate based upon the unique organizational structure of that local area's WIB.

N	LYC staff experience
2	<1 years
3	1-2 years
3	2-3 years
2	3-4 years
5	4-5 years
3	Prior to WIA (5+ years)

Of the 18 LYCs examined through interviews, three had co-chairpersons, two had interim chairpersons and one had no chairperson.

N	Type of Leadership
12	Chairperson
3	Co-Chairpersons
2	Interim Chairperson
1	No Chairperson

These current chairpersons have held their position for anywhere from less than one year to almost 5 years (the inception of WIA was in July 2000). However, years in the chair position may not be a good indicator of experience given that some LYCs chose to rotate chairpersons on a regular basis (see “changes in leadership” below).

N	Chair/Co-chair experience
4	< 1 year
3	1-2 years
3	2-3 years
6	3-4 years
4	Since inception

The Chairperson’s Profession

What is the Chairperson’s title(s) and profession outside the Youth Council?

LYC membership is a volunteer position. As such, members have a profession and title outside their role on the LYC. LYC Chairpersons worked in a variety of organization types, with most being private or non-profit organizations.

N	Chair/Co-chair profession/ organization type
8	Private
6	Non-Profit
3	Public
2	Education
1	Other

LYC Chairpersons typically held some form of leadership position in their outside professions, such as a President, CEO, Business Owner, Administrator, Director, Manager or Executive Director.

N	Chair/Co-chair title
6	Administrator/Director/Manager
5	President/VP or CEO
5	Self-employed/Business Owner
3	Executive Director
1	Other

Changes in Leadership

How many Chairpersons have there been since the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act in July 2000?

LYCs have had between one and four chairpersons (including co-chairs) since WIA's inception, with 12 LYCs having had only one or two chairpersons since inception.

N	Chairs since WIA inception
4	1 chairperson
8	2 chairpersons
5	3 chairpersons
1	4 chairpersons

11 LYCs (or their WIBs) reappoint their chairperson on a regular basis, with such a review taking place typically every year or every two years. The other 7 LYCs review the chairperson position whenever the previous chairperson steps down or when the WIB sees fit to replace him or her.

N	Process for changeover
11	Reviewed on a regular basis
7	Whenever Chair steps down or WIB chair reappoints

N	If Reviewed, how often?
4	Annually
5	Every 2 years
1	Every 3 Years
1	Every 4 Years

Organization and Activity of the Youth Council

*Do you have sub-committees or workgroups that support the work of the Youth Council?****

The Youth Council Institute's (YCi) survey revealed that two-thirds of LYCs have some form of sub-committee structure underneath the LYC or organize their members into workgroups that typically organize around particular projects.

N	Sub-Committees or Workgroups?
24	Yes
12	No

*How often does the Youth Council meet?****

Respondents to YCi's survey indicated that almost half of LYCs meet monthly with the other half meeting every other month or on a quarterly basis. One LYC meets semi-annually.

N	LYC Meeting Frequency	% of LYCs
17	Monthly	47.2%
8	Bi-Monthly	22.2%
10	Quarterly	27.7%
1	Semi-Annually	2.7%

Youth Council/WIB Interaction and Involvement

*How many Youth Council members serve on the leadership body (executive committee) of the WIB?****

YCi's survey reveals that, on average, two LYC members also serve on the leadership body of the WIB, with this number ranging from a low of none to a high of seven.

# of LYC Members on WIB leadership body	N
Average	2
Low	0
High	7
Median	1

*** All questions marked with three asterisks were administered as part of the Youth Council Institute's web-based survey, and thus results reflect answers collected from 36 LYCs. See the Methodology section for more details.

How would you describe your local Workforce Investment Board's level of involvement in your Youth Council's decisions/recommendations? Could you please provide one or two examples?

One aspect of involvement is authority to make decisions. According to respondents, the WIBs of all 18 interviewed LYCs always or almost always accepted their LYC's decisions or recommendations as given, and respondents for four LYCs added that they felt their WIB appreciates the expertise of their LYCs on youth matters and looks forward to their work. However, respondents for two LYCs noted that their LYCs make relatively few recommendations and have few responsibilities.

The other aspect of involvement is integration through shared membership and communication. According to respondents, 9 LYCs have a strong degree of integration and interaction with their WIB, 4 are somewhat less integrated and 5 LYCs (including the 2 that were uninvolved) are essentially autonomous.

N	WIB/LYC Involvement
9	Very involved
4	Somewhat involved
3	Autonomous
2	Uninvolved

Very involved: 9 LYCs have WIBs that are “very involved” or “supportive,” and which give their LYC the authority they need to sufficiently develop recommendations. These LYCs have a strong level of interaction and good communication with their WIB. Respondents also often referenced the shared membership between the WIB and LYC.

“Generally, any of the decisions or recommendations that the Youth Council makes, they go up the ladder through the board so they are very in touch. We also have several common members who do report back both of [the WIB's] activities back to the Youth Council and from the Youth Council back to [the WIB]. So there is a very good line of communication between the two.”

Somewhat involved: Four LYC have WIBs that are involved in the LYC's decision-making and recommendation process, but in a more limited way than above. For example:

- The relationship was initially “seen as somewhat autonomous” but is now “more involved in terms of [the WIB's] understanding what the LYC is doing.”
- The relationship is “advisory,” but much of its authority is relegated to other bodies through the design of the overall system.
- The respondents offered a generally positive account of the relationship, but with few examples of the way they interact.

Autonomous: Three LYCs had sufficient authority from their WIBs to make decisions, but were “separate” or “not engaged with the WIB. The role these LYCs played was appreciated by the WIB, but seen primarily as self-sustaining.

“We have a lot of autonomy. Some people kind of think that we are one in ourselves. They are not a rubber stamp kind of board, because they really do ask questions and hold us to task but they allow us the flexibility to do the things we need to do because we are the ones working with the youth and working with our providers on a contract basis and they are not.”

Uninvolved: Two LYCs might be described as autonomous, but with little or no authority. They were disempowered, either by design of the WIB or by choice of the members and were characterized as: limited in their capacity, organizations the WIB established primarily because they were required to, and which subsequently had little involvement with the WIB.

“Basically they are pretty separate...There’s really no interplay...There’s nothing for them to take to the WIB that requires the WIB approval. There’s no fiscal involvement whatsoever.”

Membership & Connections

Membership Size, Activity and Composition

*How many members do you currently have on your Youth Council?****

According to respondents for YCi's survey, LYCs ranged in size from 11 to 30 members with an average of 19 members.

# of LYC Members	N
Average	19
Low	11
High	30
Median	18

*How many members are currently active (attended 2 of the last 3 meetings)?****

Data from YCi's survey found the LYCs have anywhere from 23% of their members as active up to 100% of their members as active. On average, 74% of LYC membership is average, with a median of 79%.

% Members active	N
Average	74%
Low	23%
High	100%
Median	79%

*How many of the following types of members are represented on your Youth Council? (Please select actual numbers for each. Note: members may be represented by, and can be selected within, one or more categories.)****

Respondents for YCi's survey reported that the proportion of LYC membership comprising the various categories in the question is as follows:

% of LYC Membership	Ave	Low	High	% LYCs w/no members
Representatives from the local WIB	20%	5%	53%	0%
Representatives of youth service providers	22%	8%	50%	0%
Representatives of Juvenile Justice or law enforcement	7%	0%	36%	8%
Representatives of public housing authorities	4%	0%	9%	25%
Parents of eligible WIA youth	4%	0%	20%	36%
Representatives of Job Corps	3%	0%	8%	36%
Representatives of educational institutions	16%	0%	47%	3%
Representatives of Welfare (e.g. TANF, food stamps, etc.) agencies	3%	0%	14%	42%
Former or current participants	6%	0%	34%	36%
Other adults	8%	0%	39%	55%
Other youth	5%	0%	33%	56%

Youth Involvement

*What strategies, other than having youth serve on your council, do you use to receive youth input to the Youth Council?****

For this YCi survey question, respondent's answers report that the three most-used techniques to receive youth input are focus groups and surveys, informal feedback from service providers and youth advisory councils. Some respondents reported more than one strategy, and the answers were short. Thus, no further discussion of these answers is possible.

N	Strategies for youth input
11	Focus groups and surveys
9	Informal feedback from service providers
8	Youth advisory committees
7	Other youth boards/commissions in area
4	Youth forums
2	Special youth-driven/managed projects

Connecting with the Community

Has your Youth Council identified shared purposes or goals with other agencies or organizations in your area? If so, what are a few examples of the partnerships and the types of activities that have resulted?

Most respondents identified more than one way in which their LYCs connected or partnered with organizations in the community.

N	Connecting with the Community
8	Developing joint projects with partners
5	Integrating through membership
4	Enhancing existing services
4	Relying upon existing services
4	Incorporating providers through contracts
3	Devolving partnering to service providers

Developing joint projects with partners: 8 LYCs have developed projects in conjunction with other organizations in the community. Examples include youth forums and summits, job fairs, resource mapping projects, or new service programs for particular at-risk youth categories (foster care, juvenile justice). These collaboratives are funded through shared resources or through non-WIA grants for that project and might include non-profit, for-profit, government agencies or educational institutions.

“The Youth Council organizes and leads an annual initiative...it identifies a priority issue for youth...identifies key partners...puts together a publication...and holds a forum.”

“We have...a partnership with our county probation department, our...school district, [a foster care non-profit] and [another organization]. The reason I mention those as strong partnerships is that we were able here in the past two years to secure a grant to spend on employment and training services for kids in foster care and probation.”

Integration through membership: Five LYCs connected with the broader community of youth serving agencies and organization through their membership. Respondents discussed how these members facilitated communication in both directions: disseminating the vision and the role of the LYC out to others in the community and obtaining knowledge about other programs and services. They also discussed how these connections laid the groundwork for partnerships.

“We have a couple of members that represent youth networks. We share information and our shared vision across the board. Several members of our Youth Council participate with some of those initiatives and *visa versa*.”

Enhancing existing services: Four LYCs have integrated into the existing system by enhancing or working to improve existing services. Examples include, developing training curriculum in conjunction with community colleges, participating in local youth consortiums in the community, and helping to integrate workforce development and training aspects into new grants being offered by funders in the community.

“So I think what often happens is that we look at what other people are doing and how can we be somewhat of an enhancement, or how can we fill a gap. How can the goals and purposes that we’re doing match others and either enhance services, expand services or actually fill a gap.”

Relying upon existing services: Respondents for four LYCs discussed how their LYCs rely on existing services providers to provide services they wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford.

Examples include, the Forest Service's or California Conservation Corps' summer job opportunities, local school districts or community college job training programs, or working with other agencies that took the lead on resource mapping projects.

"We've developed MOUs with a couple of youth serving agencies that share common goals... We have partnerships with [several agencies] to provide low-cost training to older, out-of-school youth, and we also partners with other agencies to do special projects. If we don't have the partnerships in place, we're not servicing anybody."

Incorporating providers through contracts: Respondents for four LYCs referenced their contracts with service providers. They explained that through these contracts, LYCs have "integrated with various youth serving agencies" and that "the agencies that we fund... have the same shared goals." Thus, through their contracts they create a shared vision for youth services in the community.

Devolving partnering to service providers: Respondents for three LYCs indicated that the extent of their LYCs partnership or collaborative building activities falls to service providers themselves. The LYC may intentionally devolve this authority to the service providers or it may just play a very limited role, thus making it the case that the only place partnerships could emerge was through service providers.

Relationship with the Business Community

How would you describe the relationship between the Youth Council and the business community in your area?

N	Relationship with the business community
4	Strong
8	Improving
4	Limited
2	None

Strong: Respondents for four LYCs discussed having a "strong" or "very strong" relationship with business. These respondents mentioned one or more programs or activities their LYCs achieved in conjunction with businesses or ways they connected with the businesses in their community. Such activities or connections include:

- Job fairs with businesses who hire youth;
- Job programs operated in conjunction with or subsidized by business;
- Regular meetings with local business to identify workforce needs;
- Having multiple business members on the LYC; and
- Connections between businesses and contracted service providers.

"We have a strong relationship... we have a group of staff that go out and meet with business... talking about [their] needs, where they are going in the future and what we

can provide to them in terms of a future workforce... We just recently co-sponsored a job fair. It had a fabulous turnout...over 300 youth were served and 50 some employers were present.”

Improving: Respondents for eight LYCs commented that their relationship with business is satisfactory, but that “there is room for improvement,” that “it is not as good as we’d like it to be,” or that despite a deficit in past years, “it’s actually growing.” All eight LYCs had business members and respondents mentioned one or more programs or activities currently in planning or development, but not yet in effect. Examples include:

- High growth job sector training programs;
- Work readiness certificates;
- Youth issue summits involving business;
- Summer job placement programs;
- Involving business in the strategic planning process;
- Surveying local business;
- Improving business membership on the LYC; and
- Connections between businesses and contracted service providers.

Limited: Respondents for four LYCs described the relationship only in terms of their LYC’s business membership and/or the relationship that exists between contracted service providers and businesses in the community. That said, respondents identified these service provider relationships for two LYCs as “really good” or as something “they all have,” and noted that this situation was by design since these LYCs have a more decentralized approach to planning. They devolve these responsibilities to service providers.

None: Respondents for two LYCs reported that “there is no relationship,” or “there is no formal relationship” between the business community and the LYC. In both cases, individual service providers may or may not have their own, individual relationships with businesses.

Mission & Direction

The Local Youth Council's Primary Value

What would you say is the primary value of your Youth Council to the community?

Respondents typically mentioned more than one value that their LYCs provided to the community.

N	The LYC's Primary Value
10	Convening, or bringing together key players
5	Identifying and meeting youth needs
5	Preparing youth to join the workforce
4	Marketing youth workforce ideas
3	Streamlining youth services
3	Balancing provider needs with WIA demands
1	No value

Respondents for ten LYCs explained how they served as a **convener** in their community, or the entity that:

“brings together different organizations and interests around a common theme of youth employment, development and education.”

Respondents for five LYCs discussed how they **listen to the needs of youth** in their community and **find ways to meet those needs**, or:

“Just being that body that hears those concerns and issues and then creates policies or strategies to address that issue.”

Respondents for five LYCs mentioned how they **provide youth the skills and general knowledge they needed to be ready for the workforce** and to become “contributing citizens”:

“Obviously the basic value is that we’re providing needed, necessary services to the youth who are math and English deficient, reading deficient. We’re preparing youth throughout [the County] to be in the workforce.”

Respondents for four LYCs described how they **market youth workforce idea** to the community, drawing their community’s attention to the LYC or “illuminating the issue of youth and work:”

“I would say [the Youth Council] is the number one advocate for youth employment or youth vocational education in our community and through our school system.”

Respondents for three LYC referenced integrating various services and **creating a more streamlined youth services system** in which “there is not duplication. So that kids...don’t have to jump through too many hoops.”

Respondents for three LYC described one of the values of the LYC as “a balancing act:” “producing the most we can with as little investment as possible” while balancing that with the constraints and limits of the service providers available. Respondents noted that this is especially true when trying to serve non-WIA eligible youth and often requires assisting providers by leveraging additional funds.

One LYC was described as having no value because it was relatively inactive and was seen primarily as an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy.

The Local Youth Council’s Role: Catalyst or Overseer?

Some Youth Councils see their role primarily as being a catalyst for youth related planning in the community, and others see their role primarily in terms of overseeing youth-related WIA funded programs. How would you see your Youth Council’s role?

According to respondents, 17 of 18 LYCs play a catalytic role. However, 11 of these 17 LYCs also play an overseer role. No LYCs were described as fulfilling a purely overseer role and one LYC was described as fulfilling only a networking role for service providers.

N	LYC’s Role
6	Catalyst
7	In transition
4	Dual Role
1	Neither

According to respondents, six LYCs are firmly in the role of **catalyst**:

“We think not only of ourselves as catalytic, but I would hope that we think of our program investments as catalytic. It’s not just to buy the outcomes of...WIA formula money, it’s how those dollars buy and shape other resources far beyond that.”

According to respondents, seven LYCs are **in a state of transition**, from an oversight role to a more catalytic one:

“I would characterize our Youth Council right now as ‘in transition.’ Making that transition from a council that oversees the operation of programs into being a community catalyst.”

“If you had asked me that question 4 years ago, I probably would have leaned more towards just overseeing the WIA program, but as we’ve evolved...I think we’ve become more of a mixture of the two...we’ve taken a broader role in looking at what’s going on in our greater community and setting the agenda.”

Respondents described four LYCs as firmly in a **dual role**:

“We feel very strongly that we do have to provide the programs to justify the expenditure of the dollars. At the same time, we have to be advocates in the community – both the business and the not for profit community – to continue to raise the awareness for youth and vocational opportunities”

Mission/Vision Statements

Has your Youth Council formulated a Mission/Vision statement?

According to respondents:

- 14 LYC had formulated some form of vision and/or mission statement, of these,
 - Three LYC had a merged vision/mission statement;
 - Two LYC had statements of mission and vision, but they were being revised and reviewed;
 - One LYC had a vision statement but no mission statement; and
 - One LYC had adopted the WIB’s mission/vision statement.
- Respondents for two LYCs were able to discuss their missions/visions in general but they were not formalized.
- Two LYCs did not have a mission or a vision statement.

Respondents provided 11 mission and/or vision statements for review. Vision statements were broader in scope than mission statements, but both included the same basic five elements.

N	Elements of LYC Missions/Visions	Examples
10	Preparing youth for the future workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer opportunities needed for youth to become productive, responsible adults • Instill knowledge, skills and attitudes youth need to succeed in their education and career • Help youth acquire the skills and experience needed to transition into adult careers • Support the development of youth to help them become caring and civic minded adults • Maximize the opportunities to help youth achieve their potential • Offer opportunities for youth development and exploration of career options
9	Building a coordinated service system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a network of providers • Coordinate services in the system • Foster collaborations • Create a seamless system of youth services • Advocate for and sustain an integrated system • Leverage resources to include more providers and services

4	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership in the community on youth issues • Convene leadership to act on youth issues • Be the voice of youth in the community
2	Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage alternative sources of funding
1	Oversight and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor practices of providers

Youth Council Goals

What are the most important goals of your Youth Council?

Respondents for 17 of 18 LYCs provided goals during the interview process, many of which were more or less identical to their mission/vision statements. There was more emphasis on management issues (e.g. monitoring and oversight) and ways in which they were more specific (e.g. targeting higher risk youth), but, on the whole, the key elements of these goals overlapped considerably with the key elements of the LYC's mission/vision statements.

N	Elements of LYC Goals	Examples
9	Preparing Youth for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer opportunities for youth to build experience • Provide youth with the tools they need to become prepared and responsible citizens • Educate and train youth to become valuable members of the workforce • Help youth navigate into adulthood • Advocate for youth development • Provide work-readiness skills for youth
5	Building a coordinated service system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a collaborative network of providers • Build relationships with education and business • Serve as a catalytic agent in the community • Create a seamless system of youth services • Coordinate services among different youth providers
5	Monitoring and oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee programs to ensure goals are met • Ensure that needed programs are in place • Get providers to "own" performance • Conduct assessment and meet performance measures
4	Serving particular high-risk youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize out-of-school youth • Serve particular at-risk groups (e.g. foster care and probation) • Emphasize the hardest to serve
3	Identifying youth needs and connecting with services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify youths' most pressing needs • Identify gaps in training • Connect youth with appropriate services
2	Networking/problem solving for providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the needs of providers in helping youth • Help service providers network and share practices
1	Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get beyond just WIA funds

Strategic Planning

Has your Youth Council developed its own strategic plan or did it help to develop the youth-related strategic goals of the WIB's strategic plan?

14 LYCs have been involved in a strategic planning process, with four LYCs developing their own strategic plan, three helping the WIB to develop the overall strategic plan and seven being involved in both processes.

N	Developed a Strategic Plan?
4	Developed LYC's own
3	Helped to develop the WIB's
7	Worked on both
4	Neither

Respondents for 5 LYCs mentioned the close connection between the WIB and the LYC as the reason they had helped to develop the youth-related components of the WIB's strategic plan. These LYCs include both those who worked only on the WIB's plan or did so in addition to their own. Respondents for the four LYCs that had done no strategic plan provided no one reason why they had not.

Has it been difficult for the Youth Council to carry out the youth-related strategic goals approved by your WIB? Why or why not?

N	Challenges to carry out goals?
7	Attainable vs. lofty
6	Barriers to service provision
4	Active v. inactive plans

For the 14 LYCs who had strategic plans, no respondents said that it been difficult for their LYC to carry out these goals. However, several described some existing, but minor, challenges they face or past challenges they've overcome. Other respondents described the reasons why it has not been challenging for them to carry out these strategic goals.

Attainable vs. lofty goals: Respondents for 7 LYCs stressed the importance of making the goals of the strategic plan attainable and achievable given the limits of the system. Respondents for two LYCs stressed that goals they've been challenged to meet have often been the lofty or unrealistic ones.

Barriers to service provision (e.g. emphasis on out-of-school youth, funding shortages or performance measures): Respondents for four LYC discussed how various barriers had or to some extent still do impede their ability to fulfill their stated goals. In the case of three LYCs, the challenge has to do with outreach to older/out-of-school youth (see more below). Representatives for two LYCs mentioned a lack of funding as either a challenge to meeting

certain strategic goals or an impediment to generating a plan in the first place. For one LYC, these challenges had to do with transitioning service providers from JTPA to WIA's stricter performance requirements.

Active vs. inactive strategic plan: Respondents for four LYCs discussed the importance of referring to their strategic goals in meetings or reviewing the document on a regular basis. For one of these LYCs, this had been a challenge in the past.

"All Youth – One System" Principles

Has your Youth Council adopted the "all youth – one system" principles? Has this been useful? Why or why not?

According to respondents, 15 LYCs had adopted the AYOS principles. However, three of these LYC were described as struggling to implement the AYOS principles and three were described as adopting them in theory, but not in practice. According to respondents, three LYCs had not adopted the AYOS principles in theory or in practice.

N	Adopted AYOS principles?	Reason for decision and number of LYC citing		
		All v. WIA-eligible youth	Coordinating Service Providers	AYOS not a priority
9	Yes, and find useful	7	4	
3	Yes, but struggling	1	2	
3	Yes, but not in practice	3		1
3	No			2

Respondents gave one (or sometimes more than one) of three reasons as to why their LYCs, adopted or did not adopt the AYOS principles.

All youth v. WIA-eligible youth: Respondents for 10 LYCs noted that AYOS and WIA are really two systems, one emphasizing all youth and one emphasizing only at-risk, low-income youth. The respondents for the seven LYC that found AYOS principles useful noted that they like serving all youth because WIA eligibility is burdensome, it gives them acceptance in the community, or it validates the direction that they independently wanted to go (i.e. serving all youth). Respondents for the four LYCs that are struggling to or did not put AYOS principles into practice explained that this very disconnect is a challenge; they typically did not have the funding to pursue the AYOS principles because of the demands already placed on them to serve more at-risk youth is so great that they can't focus their attention on all youth.

Coordinating Service Providers: Respondents for six LYCs noted that it can be challenging to integrate the various service providers and their different philosophies. Respondents for the four LYCs that found AYOS principles useful explained that the AYOS materials helped them overcome this challenge. Respondents for the other two LYCs had not found this to be the case yet, but they were working on it.

AYOS not a priority: Respondents for three LYCs noted that putting the AYOS principles into practice was not a priority for them so they had either never brought it up or had adopted the principles then simply not followed through.

Resource-Mapping and Gap Analysis

Has your Youth Council completed a resource-mapping and gap analysis project? What did this project entail? Has this been useful? Why or why not?

According to respondents, five LYCs have completed both resource mapping and gap analysis projects, eight have completed only a resource mapping project and may or may not be starting on a gap analysis, two regularly, but informally do resource mapping and/or gap analysis work in their meetings and three have done neither a resource mapping nor gap analysis project.

N	Completed RM and GA?
5	RM & GA
8	RM only
2	Informal RM
3	Neither

How these two projects are defined formally in the literature and how respondents think about these projects may vary somewhat. Based upon respondents' answers, a resource-mapping project entails locating providers of youth services in the community and identifying what services they provide. A gap analysis involves rating these programs, identifying the ways they overlap and/or identifying missing, but needed services.

The way in which these projects were conducted varies from LYC to LYC. The projects as described by respondents entailed surveying students to organizing youth or One-Stop employees to canvas neighborhoods and collect information to hiring consulting firms. Several respondents also discussed having worked with educational organizations or local non-profits on resource mapping projects they had spearheaded.

Respondents for 7 LYCs (3 that did RM & GA and 4 that did RM only) reported that their completed projects turned out less than optimal and have not been all that useful because:

- The project lacked sufficient funding to be done adequately (4 LYCs)
- The information is out of date and hasn't been maintained (3 LYCs)
- Both of the above reasons (1 LYC)

No reasons were provided for two of the three LYCs that did neither project. The reason cited by the third was a lack of funds.

Services Delivery System

Location of WIA Youth Services

Are youth service providers in your local area located/co-located in One-Stop centers, elsewhere in the community or both?

WIA funded services are offered both in One-Stop centers and elsewhere in the community in 14 of the 18 local areas. Two LYCs chose to locate services entirely in One-Stops and two chose to have only service providers elsewhere in the community provide services.

N	Location of Youth Services
14	Both in One-Stops and in the community
2	One-Stops only
2	Elsewhere in the community only

If both, are the youth services provided in One-Stop centers different from those provided elsewhere in the community? If so, how?

Ten of the 14 local areas that offer services in both the One-Stops and in the community provided less than full services in their One-Stops. In some cases One-Stops provided services and in others they provided only limited services such as single program elements, services to particular types of youth or just referrals to services.

Three of these 14 local areas had youth services in some One-Stops in their area but not others. The local area might, for example, have multiple geographic regions within the local workforce investment area, each with its own One-Stop. Some of these One-Stops would have youth services and others would not, depending upon the needs of that particular region within the workforce area and the capacity of those service providers.

Only one local area was described as having full services in both the community and in the One-Stops, however, that local area had only one One-Stop.

N	How services differed	Examples of services provided
10	Less than full services in One-Stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intake and basic assessment • providing youth service representatives to guide youth through the One-Stop system • some case-management services • representation by some but not other contracted service providers • services to only some youth (i.e. out-of-school) • summer job program recruitment • referrals
3	Varies with each One-Stop	
1	Same in One-Stops and Community	

What are some of the challenges to locating/co-located youth services in One-Stop centers in your local area?

Respondents for 15 LYCs provided from 1-3 challenges each that fell into one of three categories. Respondents for the other three LYCs either identified no challenges or gave answers that were not able to be coded.

N	Challenges to One-Stop location
9	Youth-Friendliness
7	Transportation
4	Added expense for providers
3	Insufficient space

Youth-friendliness: One-Stops are typically places that are staffed by and designed to serve adults. Respondents explained that without taking steps to make them more youth-friendly, One-Stops can often be intimidating, confusing or unwelcome places for youth.

- “The eternally tough question is how to create a front door for access that is friendly and enticing to youth?”
- “Making them youth friendly...to not have judgments made on youth with how they’re dressed or how they’re accepted, or even just how staff talk to youth...the ability of staff to understand and relate to kids in the center and make them feel like they are in the right place.”

Transportation: In many rural areas the distances to One-Stops can be significant, and One-Stops in many urban can be just as inaccessible if they are located in out-of-the way areas, such as business parks. Both of these problems are compounded by the fact that youth and low incomes mean that many WIA-eligible youth are dependent on public transit, which is limited in rural areas or may not reach out-of-the way urban areas.

- “The reality is that kids don’t have the transportation and when you’re talking poor kids, their parents don’t have the transportation...”
- “Transportation in our area is the number one problem. Our county is [big]. There are some real rural areas and some of the kids who have the greatest need are located in the farthest areas.”

Added expense for providers: Some providers of youth services are already located somewhere in the community. Co-locating them in One-Stops can mean additional expenses in the form of staffing, equipment or travel time, an expense which many cash-strapped service providers cannot afford.

- “Money. They don’t have the funds to have a separate office...a separate staff person in the One-Stop.”
- “The challenges are as with any agency...we’re saddled with a system that has high costs. So typically, non-profits can’t always afford to locate here.”

Insufficient space: Respondents for three LYCs explained that they had insufficient space within their One-Stops to be able to co-locate youth service providers.

- “Mainly it’s spacing – square footage. Right now we’re in a restructuring phase and spacing is one of the issues we face with co-locating our vendors or service providers.”
- “Our issue is space availability in our One-Stops. We have limited space availability.”

Types of WIA Funded Youth Service Providers

What is your best estimate of the % of WIA-funded youth programs provided by the following types of service providers:

It should be emphasized that the following data should be viewed as only a very rough estimate. It was sometimes informed by documentation and sometimes represents only a best guess on the part of respondents. Besides the approximate nature of the data, two other ways the data may be inaccurate: 1) respondents appeared to include their county offices of education under the “Public” category and school districts or schools under “Educational Institutions,” but it is not clear that this is always the case; 2) based upon other questions, it appears that some respondents may have included various sub-contractors and collaborative partners in their mix where others may have not.

Type of Provider	Ave	Low	High
Non-Profit	52%	0%	100%
Educational Institution	24%	0%	85%
Public	21%	0%	100%
For-Profit	3%	0%	33%
Other	0%	0%	0%

Type of Intake Process

Do youth enter the service delivery system through a centralized intake process in your local area?

Data from this question was not collected in about half of cases and so was not analyzed.

Delivery of the 10 Required Service Elements

Are all 10 of WIA’s specified program elements provided by each service provider or do different providers provide different program elements?

N	All 10 elements by each?
16	Yes
2	No

According to respondents, 16 LYCs hold their contracted service providers responsible for providing all 10 of WIA’s specified program elements. However, respondents for 11 of these LYCs noted that in many cases, service providers were not able to provide all 10 program

elements themselves. So while they were held responsible for doing so as part of their contract, they often provided some of these elements through partnerships or sub-contracts with other service providers.

Although the details of the contracting process were not specifically inquired about, respondents for three LYC volunteered some additional information that helps to describe ways in which contracts work in various local areas:

- Contractors with one LYC must detail any partnerships or sub-contractors in their contract.
- The service providers in one area had informally formed coalitions around the lead service provider established by the contract.
- One LYC requires service providers to build formal coalitions around a lead agency and specify those in the contract.

Respondents for two LYCs answered that not all service providers provided all 10 WIA program elements. These two LYCs oversaw the provision of services and put out contracts for the provision of particular program elements.

Is your Youth Council pleased with the current system?

Respondents for 13 LYCs noted that they were pleased with the way that the 10 program elements were provided in their areas. Respondents for three LYCs noted that they were either displeased because various obstacles hindered their abilities to ensure the provision of all 10 program elements. Answers for two LYCs were not recorded.

N	Is the LYC pleased?	Comments
13	Yes	
3	Maybe/No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% OSY spending requirement impedes more participation with schools • Not enough competition, hence strained ability to provide all elements • Lack of funding stretches thin the ability to provide 10 elements

Services for In-school vs. Out-of-school Youth

In your local area, are in-school and out-of-school youth served by the same or by different providers?

According to respondents, in-school and out-of-school youth were served by the same providers in eight local areas and by different providers in two local areas. In the other eight local areas, whether in-school youth were served by the same providers as out-of-school youth varied by provider, geographic region within the local workforce area or both.

As it turns out, respondents mentioned that the same answers given for this question were also true of the next question regarding older and younger youth. This is presumably because LYCs are required to divide spending along IS/OS youth lines, while they are required to record performance by younger or older youth, although it need not be the case. Providers in one local area are required in their contracts to target younger or older youth.

N	Division of IS/OS or younger/older providers	Comments
8	Same provider(s) serve all youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have only one provider • The only difference is in capacity • Same individuals work with both youth and adults, but provide different services
2	Different providers for different youth	
8	Varies by provider, geographic region or both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly the same, but a few providers serve one or the other group • Mostly the same providers for all youth, but different in a few geographic regions • Some providers serve both groups, but belong to a collaborative whose members serve only one or the other • Providers chose one or both groups when bidding and LYC monitors overall mix • Sometimes different providers because school providers aren't able to work with OSY

Is your Youth Council pleased with the current system?

N	Is the LYC pleased?	Comments
12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all providers can serve all youth, but the present system overcomes this. • Like making providers collaborate to ensure that all groups are covered • There used to be problems, but better now. • Four categories are difficult to manage • It's difficult for all providers to address all youth • Would prefer to serve more ISY
2	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to change in the next RFP process • Want more competition
4	No answer	

With the exception of four LYCs for whom answers were not recorded, respondents for 12 LYCs seemed pleased with how the current provider approaches. Nevertheless, some took the opportunity to suggest what they liked and others, while pleased, remarked on some challenges

they saw with handling the IS/OS and younger/older requirements. Respondents for two LYCs noted that they were less than pleased about their current system with regard to these categories of youth.

Services for Older vs. Younger Youth

In your local area, are older and younger youth served by the same or by different providers? Is your Youth Council pleased with the current system?

See results for services for the previous question regarding in-school vs. out-of-school youth.

Monitoring and Oversight

Soliciting Bids from Service Providers

How would you describe the responsibilities that your Youth Council has to bidders during the Request for Proposal (RFP) process?

In their answers, respondents chose to highlight a wide range of topics and ideas. From these responses emerged three responsibilities corresponding to stages in the application process: the oversight and development of the RFP, the solicitation and assistance of applicants, and the evaluation and recommendation of applicants for the receipt of contracts. Some respondents also discussed certain actions their LYCs took to fulfill these responsibilities.

N	Responsibilities	Actions take to fulfill responsibilities	N
9	Overseeing and Developing the RFP	Develop the RFP through public forums	5
		Develop protocols/procedures to guide the overall RFP process	3
13	Soliciting and aiding in the application process	Hold conferences or workshops for bidders	8
		Answer bidder questions	7
		Advertise the RFP through various sources	3
7	Evaluating and recommending contracts		

In addition to these responsibilities, respondents mentioned two other activities LYCs took that cut across these responsibilities. Respondents for seven LYCs highlighted the steps they took to ensure that bidders were educated about what was expected of them under WIA. Respondents for five LYCs noted establishing particular committees composed of LYC members, WIB members or both who were responsible for any or all of the above mentioned responsibilities.

Finally, respondents for four LYCs discussed the challenges associated with ensuring that there is no conflict of interest due to having potential bidders (i.e. service providers) as members of the LYC. These LYCs took various steps to resolve this challenge such as leaving RFP work to staff, selecting only members without a conflict of interest to participate, or by removing all RFP-related responsibilities from the LYC and giving them to the WIB.

Has your Youth Council faced any challenges in soliciting bids from service providers during the RFP process?

N	Challenges soliciting bids?
6	Yes
11	No

According to respondents, 11 LYCs faced no current challenges. Some of these LYCs provided reasons as to why they did not.

- Five LYCs had faced problems in the past but had overcome them.
- Two LYCs had received many bids.
- Two LYCs have had the same contractors since JTPA, but they work well.
- One had received few, but a better than expected number of bids given the lack of providers in the area.

Of the 6 LYCs, whose respondents indicated they had experience problems:

- Three had too few providers in their area.
- Three found that getting new and different bidders was often challenging even if getting enough bidders was not a problem, since current providers had too much experience.

Challenges with Performance Measures

Do the federal performance measures for older/younger youth provide the information you need to understand whether service providers produce results?

- *If they do: "Are there ways these measures could be improved?"*
- *If they do not: "In what ways has your Youth Council responded?"*

N	Are performance measures useful?
6	Yes
3	Yes, but of limited use
9	No

Respondents were split as to whether they found federal performance measures useful in measuring results, but the balance was tipped against the current performance measures since respondents for 3 LYCs found the measures useful but of limited use. Respondents for all but one LYC discussed various challenges they faced in using existing measures and provided some suggestions for overcoming them. Challenges can be grouped into three categories.

Performance Measure Challenges	
1: System too complicated due to different measures for older/younger youth	
Challenges	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So many measures create additional administrative burden and reduce capacity of providers to serve youth. • Two sets of performance measures for older/younger youth are unnecessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of performance measures. (4 LYC) • Combine or treat older youth as adults.
2: Measures don't assess what matters to local areas	
Challenges	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using rates to measure performance is challenging for areas that serve small # of youth (i.e. 1 or 2 youth is substantial & change) • Rates allow providers to fudge data by adjusting numbers to raise their percentages • Measures are too long-term and make it difficult to assess short-term results • Measures don't obviously connect with the 10 required service elements. • The system needs better quality control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use numerical successes over percentages. (4 LYC) • Develop intermediary measures. (2 LYC) • Measure achievement of the 10 elements. (2 LYC) • Develop customer service measures and provider certification.
3: Problems with Particular Performance Measures	
Challenges	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The graduation rate is measured just before students graduate. (2 LYC) • Wage rate increases required are too high for the population served. (2 LYC) • Retention rate is difficult to measure because UI not recorded for all employers or lags. (2 LYC) • Credential definition is defined broadly. (2 LYC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the measurement period to best capture graduation times. • Use a graduated wage rate • Don't require as substantial a wage increase for youth without prior experience • Need local flexibility or alternative ways to measure retention. • Make it more defined • Keep local flexibility

Challenges with Eligibility

Have you heard of specific challenges faced by service providers in your local area with regard to determining eligibility?

N	Eligibility challenges?	Comments
12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation too cumbersome • Eligibility requirements too rigid
6	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So many eligible youth • Providers are experts/well-trained • Resources available for non-eligible youth

Respondents for 12 LYCs stated that their service providers faced challenges with eligibility. These challenges fell into one of two categories with some respondents mentioning both.

1. Respondents for 9 LYCs remarked that documentation requirements are too cumbersome, especially for the at-risk youth that WIA targets. The general sentiment seems to be that the documentation required to prove eligibility would be difficult for any youth to produce, but it's worse for WIA-eligible youth often have parents who do not keep excellent records or are absent altogether. And, even when WIA-eligible youth do have access to the required documents, youth may not do so because they find it stigmatizing to be labeled low-income.

“Oh, yes. It's cumbersome. It's very difficult. It's time consuming. Half the kids don't even know where their paperwork is, especially those that are coming out of jail or juvenile hall. They don't even know where their parents are.”

2. Respondents of six LYCs expressed the concern that the income eligibility limits were too low or too inflexible, thus excluding otherwise needy youth.

“...you have a family that may be a couple of hundred dollars or so over the income bracket and that doesn't necessarily say that that particular family isn't as needy as the family that was underneath the economic bracket.”

Respondents for six LYCs reported that they had heard of no particular challenges from service providers with regard to eligibility and offered the following as some reasons why:

- Two LYCs reported have so many eligible youth in their area that finding them is not a problem.
- The service providers in two local areas are well trained or described as “experts” at their job and thus do not face these challenges.
- One LYC had been able find resources for non-WIA eligible youth such that low-income eligibility was not an issue since all youth had access to services.

Challenges in Enrolling Youth

Have service providers expressed any concerns about enrolling too few youth? If so, what types of youth? What has been the response?

N	Too few youth?	Comments
14	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out-of-school youth more difficult to find and retain• Too little funding means serving too few youth
4	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• So many youth

According to respondents, the service providers of 14 LYCs had expressed concerns about enrolling too few youth. Of these, half had made changes or were working to overcome these problems. However, respondents of 7 LYCs (some who answered “yes” and some who

answered “no”) report that improvement efforts are just beginning show results and that they or that they are just barely getting by.

The concerns fall into two distinct camps.

1. Service providers of 9 LYCs raised concerns about enrolling too few out-of-school youth. The challenge is both recruitment – these youth are harder to locate since they are not in school and often unemployed – and retention – they often would rather find a job than participate in a program or are in some ways less motivated to succeed. Both make serving this particular group of youth more resource and time intensive.

“I think our out-of-school youth...are a harder population because in most cases they are no longer in a school system or in programs or sites where you’d normally find young people. They are more intermingled with an adult population so they are harder to recruit...I think we invest more time and effort and for the time and effort involved you probably do not recruit the number you would with younger youth.”

“When you’re talking about the volumes of paperwork...for a lot of [out-of-school youth], it’s easier to go ahead and get the minimum wage job because at least they are getting money than trying to spend 30 or 60 days to try and accumulate all of the paperwork and get it filled out and get it accepted and get it to the counselor so that they can get into training so that they can eventually get the money....It is not a 30, 60 or 90 day concern. It is a 90 second concern.”

2. Service providers of five LYCs were concerned about serving too few youth of any group because of too little funding. Comments indicated that there were typically plenty of eligible youth and that finding them was not a problem, but that having enough money to serve enough kids was.

“We have lots of kids who would like to be part of the program and we don’t have money to serve them. It’s not that we don’t have enough eligible kids, we have plenty of those. Across the board: in-school, out-of-school, older, younger. We got ‘em.”

The service providers of four LYCs had not expressed any concerns about enrolling too few youth, with respondents of two of these LYCs adding that this was because there were so many eligible youth in their area.

Resources

Local Youth Council Budgets

What was the Youth Council's budget in 2003-04?

According to the information provided by respondents, LYC budgets vary widely. However, it should be noted first, that the question may have confused respondents given that they are in their 04-05 budget years. Accordingly, answers may reflect totals for either of these budget years. Second, many of these answers are only a rough approximation. Nevertheless, given that other budgetary information was not readily available and that the information provided by respondents does provide an approximate measure, it is a worthwhile starting point from which to assess the range of budgets managed by LYCs throughout the State.

Average Budget	\$3,708,804
High	\$20,000,000
Low	\$210,000
Median	\$2,300,000

What is your best estimate of the % of that total budget from each of these categories:

% of Total Budget	Average	Low	High
WIA Formula	90%	52%	100%
WIA Discretionary	1%	0%	17%
Other Public	8%	0%	41%
Private	1%	0%	8%
In-kind by partners	-	-	-
Other	1%	0%	1%

According to respondents, LYCs rely heavily on WIA formula funds – 90% on average – with nine LYCs relying on these funds exclusively. The second biggest source of funds was from other public agencies – 8% on average. Several respondents reported that they do leverage significant in-kind funds from partners, but they do not formally track this information in their budgets. Respondents also noted that service providers both receive funds from other sources to do their work and typically rely on partners, but gathering information on these funds would require a thorough review of service provider contracts, if it is available at all.

The Impact of Reductions

Have reductions in WIA formula funds affected your programs? If so, how?

N	Experienced Reductions?	Comments
15	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service reductions/fewer providers• Staffing cuts• Reorganization of the system• Fewer \$ into the community• Loss of special programs• Strain on delivery of program elements
3	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerned about future cuts

According to respondents, 15 LYCs have experienced reductions in funding. Of these, respondents mentioned the following effects these reductions have had:

- Nine local areas have experienced a reduction in the numbers of youth served, as much as in half over the past few years, or have been forced to eliminate entire service providers.
- Nine local areas experienced staffing reductions.
 - Respondents of three LYC noted that they had made it a point to prioritize cutting staff over services.
 - Respondent(s) of one LYC noted that the LYC was meeting less often.
- Three LYCs have completed, are in the process of, or considering some form of reorganization such as changing the way contractors partner, bringing service providers into the One-Stops or reorganizing the WIB to allow it to search for additional funds.
- Other effects experienced include a reduction in money that goes into the community, a loss of special programs, and a strain on providing basic service elements.

Respondents of three LYCs said that they had not yet been affected by reductions in funding, but that they expected to be in subsequent years.

Local Youth Council Staffing

How much dedicated youth staffing does your Youth Council have access to through your WIB? Through other sources?

Based upon respondent estimates, the average LYC had access to .6 FTE WIB staff to assist in their work. However, several respondents were unable to provide an answer. It seems that the way various WIBs are housed within or operated by other government agencies blurs the line between WIB staff and other staff related to LYC activities making it difficult to get an accurate count of dedicated LYC staff.

Local Youth Council Expenditures

What is your best estimate of the % of WIA formula funds that you spend on:

Older vs. younger youth:

One-Stop vs. Community-based services:

What is your best estimate of the % of your total budget that you spent on:

Non WIA-eligible youth:

Older vs. younger youth:

In-school vs. out-of-school youth:

One-Stop vs. Community-based services:

Most respondents were unable to provide information for much of these two questions. The data was unavailable either because it was not tracked in such a way as to provide an answer or because, if it was, it was not easily accessible. Results were, therefore, tabulated only for the older/younger and out-of-school/in-school expenditures for total LYC budgets (90% of which, on average, are WIA formula funds). That said, data on older/younger youth spending was unavailable for five LYCs, and data on out-of-school/in-school youth was unavailable for four LYCs.

The results show that LYCs tended to spend somewhat less, on average, on older and out-of-school youth than on younger and in-school youth, although these results vary considerably with LYCs spending much more or somewhat less on each of these two categories. It also turns out that spending on older youth is correlated with spending on out-of-school youth, with LYCs that spend more on older youth also spending more on out-of-school youth. In fact, four LYCs do not differentiate between these two groups for the purposes of spending.

Spending category	Average	Low	High
Older	36%	10%	70%
Younger	64%	30%	90%
Out-of-School	48%	30%	70%
In-School	52%	30%	70%

Federal & State Governance

The State Youth Council

How would you describe the State Youth Council's current role in the system?

N	Answer Type	Critical Comments
9	Just critical of the SYC's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little interaction/unsure of the SYC's role (4)• Same, but appreciated support of YCi (5)
4	Critical of, but also described the SYC's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little interaction/unsure of the SYC's role (2)• Same, but appreciated support of YCi (2)
5	Described the SYC's role	

Respondents for 13 LYCs were critical of the role played by the State Youth Council (SYC). Of these, respondents for 4 of these LYCs offered a description of what they thought the SYC's role might be and then raised criticisms with it, while respondents for 9 LYCs were simply critical and did not offer a description. In part, their lack of a description was due to the fact that they were uncertain of what its role is. All of these criticisms fall into one of two categories:

- 1) Respondents for 6 LYCs were critical of the lack of communication and interaction with the SYC and expressed uncertainty about what this role was.

“What State Youth Council?...Our interaction or participation is minimal at best.”

- 2) Respondents for seven LYCs were similarly critical, but added that, although they were uncertain about the SYC's role, they did appreciate its role insofar as it supported the Youth Council Institute (YCi).

“I don't feel it. I feel the Youth Council Institute very much. YCi yes. The State Youth Council I don't feel very much. Now if the State Youth Council has an impact on funding and perpetuating YCi through New Ways to Work, then to that extent we feel it. YCi is great.”

Respondents for 9 LYCs offered a description of what they thought SYC's current role in the system was. As discussed, respondents for four of these LYCs also offered critical comments. The roles these respondents offered varied considerably and had little overlap. In one case, the account included programs and events offered by YCi. Based on the descriptions provided, local area LYCs envision the SYC as an entity that:

- Provides policy guidance
- Speaks on behalf of LYCs
- Operates as a state version of LYCs: advising, recommending and representing youth issues statewide.
- Communicates importance of youth issues, supports YCi and supports “All Youth – One System” principles
- Examines youth issues at both a State and local level

What do you think its role should be?

Respondents' comments fell into four categories for what they thought the State Youth Council's role should be.

N	Role
10	Advocate for and support LYCs
9	Provide more information and assistance to LYCs
8	Provide leadership and coordinate policy development
4	Don't know/uncertain

Advocate for and support LYCs:

- Increase visibility and overall involvement
- Increase communication with local areas
- Attend local meetings
- Listen to and represent local needs at the State and federal levels.
- Advocate for additional funding
- Protect local flexibility and local control

Provide more information and assistance to LYCs:

- Develop and disseminate information and guidance on new and existing legislation
- Provide clarification on spending requirements and funding
- Providing more technical assistance, especially to rural areas

Provide leadership and coordinate policy development:

- Develop and promote statewide policy
- Coordinate and streamline workforce services and develop partnerships between state level agencies that will facilitate the work of LYCs.
- Address the statewide and local level challenges of pursuing both WIA requirements, while pursuing the goals of the All Youth – One System approach.

Don't know/uncertain:

- Uncertain what the State Youth Councils role should be because there is so little contact and interaction.

The Youth Council Institute

How would you describe the Youth Council Institute's current role in the system?

What do you think its role should be?

Respondents for 17 LYCs described the Youth Council Institute's (YCi) role in terms of the various types of assistance and support it provides to LYCs around the state. Of these, respondents of 8 LYCs specifically complimented YCi, noting what a "good," "important," "wonderful," or "outstanding" job it was doing. Most other respondents thought that YCi was doing what it should be doing, although respondents of two LYCs indicated that they had learned all they could from YCi and weren't sure what its role should be for them. Respondents of two

other LYCs mentioned that it would be good if YCi could provide free trainings and assistance since they didn't have the money to take advantage of this assistance. Finally, respondents for two LYCs also discussed the availability of trainings, which had been limited in their local areas.

N	Role of/Assistance provided by YCi ³
8	Researching and disseminating best practices
7	Developing materials or assisting with organizational development and planning
7	Providing trainings, conferences, seminars, etc.
7	Providing technical assistance
3	Promotion of "All Youth – One System" and youth development principles
2	Updates on WIA

The respondent(s) for the one remaining LYC not yet discussed how they were unaware of YCi, but that they were familiar with the State Youth Council. Although this was an unusual response, respondents for 8 LYCs (of the 17 mentioned above) did express some form of confusion or uncertainty about the relationship between YCi and the State Youth Council. Of these, some respondents conflated YCi and the State Youth Council, perhaps realizing their confusion and correcting it and perhaps not. Others commented that they weren't clear about how YCi and the State Youth Council fit together or were somewhat critical of the fact that YCi appeared to be doing the State Youth Council's work.

"I don't understand how [YCi] ties into the State Youth Council. I know it's a bunch of consultants and they offer a lot of training and they have workshops...What's with [YCi]? Are they doing the State Youth Councils work?"

Still others expressed this same sentiment, but were more positive about YCi's work.

"I work with YCi a lot...They've been great. They've come here for training. They've been available. Probably how the State Youth Council should function, but I can't complain because YCi does it and that makes my life much easier."

Useful Sources of Information

What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from the State Youth Council? From YCi?

Most respondents either reiterated answers to the previous two questions about the State Youth Council and Youth Council Institute or provided no additional information. Subsequently, answers have been incorporated into the answers given above to the previous two questions.

³ The responses in this table combine the answers respondents gave to both this question and the next one, regarding the helpful types of information or support they receive from YCi.

Federal Emphasis on Particular Youth Categories

Federal requirements prioritize particular types of youth. Does your Youth Council agree with these priorities? If not, which youth would you prioritize?

Respondents for all 18 LYCs agree with the current priorities that require 30% of spending for out-of-school youth and recognize the need to target specific high-risk categories such as youth transitioning out of the foster care system and youth in the juvenile justice system.

Respondents for 14 of these LYCs also discussed whether they would agree with a further increase in the required spending on out-of-school youth or require services to new high-risk youth categories such as children of incarcerated youth.

N	Increase the emphasis on highest-risk youth?	Why?
9	Disagree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on prevention, not remediation• Have local needs/prefer local control• Need more funding to match priorities• More dedicated funding is wasteful
5	Agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have already or would create some new priorities.
4	Don't address	

Respondents for 9 (of the 14) LYCs disagreed with any such proposals.

- Respondents for four LYCs explained that they believed that prevention was more important than remediation and thus focusing on out-of-school youth has things backwards. They believe that more emphasis should be placed on in-school youth in order to prevent them from becoming out-of-school youth.
- Respondents for four LYCs emphasized that these new priorities clash with the needs of their local areas, something that they know best. They want more local control in the setting of these priorities.
- Respondents for two LYCs indicated that these higher risk youth are more expensive and harder to serve. They would be willing to focus more attention on them, but would like to see the funding follow the required emphasis.
- Respondent(s) for one LYC indicated that creating new specialized programs just increases layers of bureaucracy and waste.

Respondents for five LYCs indicated that they would be willing to consider increasing the emphasis on certain higher risk youth and have already changed their spending requirements, or would be willing to do so, to serve more out-of-school youth. However, respondent(s) for one LYC indicated that they would not be willing to go so far as a complete reversal of the current 30/70, out-of-school/in-school split as has been suggested in prior reauthorization language. Respondent(s) for another LYC were specifically not interested in taking on children of incarcerated youth as a priority at this time because identifying such youth would be too difficult.

Summing Up

The Best Things About the Youth Service System Under WIA

What do you like most about the current system of youth services provision?

Respondents' answers typically included more than one item that they liked about youth services under WIA.

N	Best Things about Youth Services Under WIA
8	Local control and local flexibility
8	Providing comprehensive services
7	Funding for youth services
4	The collaborative role of Youth Councils

Local control and local flexibility: Respondents for 8 LYCs mentioned how they valued the ability to be able to design service systems that were responsive to the needs and resources in their communities. Many of these comments expressed the sentiment that the worst thing the State or federal government could do would be to take away this local control.

“The great thing about [the current system] is that local areas have freedom to decide how to service youth. The system is fluid enough where local areas get to chose what their priorities are. They get to chose...how they are going to have the 10 elements delivered.”

Providing comprehensive services: Respondents for 8 LYCs mentioned several ways in which WIA, at least in California, provides for comprehensive services for many different types of youth. Respondents discussed how under this system, “we’re seeking to serve all youth,” the presence of the “All Youth – One System” principles, and the State’s focus on youth development issues. They also spoke of the way in which the way in which the 10 elements help to prepare youth in all aspects of life.

“It’s not a perfect system, but I think it’s probably one of the more effective one’s because it really does try to be comprehensive and address the needs of the different youth groups.”

Funding for youth services: Although a somewhat mixed response in that it was often followed up with complaints about the absence of enough funding (see next question), respondents for seven LYCs were nevertheless appreciative of the fact that WIA exists and that it does provide youth with services in their community. They commented that “we desperately need programs like this,” or “I like that there is some money.”

Collaborative nature of Youth Councils: Respondents for four LYCs pointed to the importance of being able to reach out, build relationships and learn from others in the community. They described the importance of “being a catalytic agent” or “bringing people to the table that can contribute resources as well as their ideas and how we can collaborate

together.” They also specifically mentioned as important, “interaction with the business community” and the fact that private business members can be on the Youth Council.

The Worst Things about the Youth Service System Under WIA

What do you dislike most about the current system of youth services provision?

Respondents’ answers typically included more than one item that they disliked about the youth services system under WIA.

N	Worst Things about Youth Services Under WIA
9	Diminishing funding
9	Challenges with performance, eligibility and spending requirements
5	Not enough local control
4	No summer jobs program
2	Other

Diminishing funding: Respondents for 9 LYCs pointed to diminishing funding as one of the worst things about the current system. They commented that as a result too few youth are getting served and that it is increasingly difficult for them to fulfill their mission.

“It’s disconcerting as far as I’m concerned that there’s not more focus on serving youth who will one day become the workforce or members of the workforce. I don’t understand why monies for youth programs keep getting cut back.”

They also commented that this reduction in funding is particularly at odds with both the increasing emphasis the federal government seemed to be placing on harder-to-serve, more at-risk youth and the simultaneous demand from the state to serve all youth.

“If we’re really going to move towards a system that serves all youth in one system, then we really need to tie that to the funding...we’ve realized locally that it costs three times as much to serve an out-of-school youth as it does an in-school youth...[the system needs to] make sure that our funding matches our priorities and our vision so we can plan.”

Furthermore, respondents commented that the strategies suggested by the state and federal governments, such as partnering and collaborating, only go so far to stretch already thin funds.

“The work is laughable given the funding available. Why would anyone want to do this programming as poorly resourced as it is. This is an inherent flaw in WIA. The notion of resource sharing and partnerships just doesn’t cut it. They have partners and those partners are being cut too.”

Challenges with performance, eligibility, and spending requirements: Respondents for 9 LYCs mentioned challenges with performance, eligibility and spending requirements that do not differ substantially from, and in many cases are the same as, those raised previously by respondents in earlier questions more specific to these issues. Respondents did add that these challenges strain their ability to provide services and meet the needs of youth in their local areas.

“Performance requirements are so great that we’re continuing to have a lot of need that we’re not able to serve.”

Not enough local control: Respondents for five LYCs mentioned that they would like more flexibility and local control specifically in connection with the various performance, eligibility and enrollment issues just discussed. They believe that local control would allow them to better serve youth given the particular needs in their communities and in some cases serve more youth.

No summer jobs program: Respondents for four LYCs lamented the loss of their funded summer jobs program they had under JTPA. These programs had high visibility in their local areas and brought in broad support for youth programs particularly because they served all youth.

“That was probably one of the most successful, high profile programs under the PIC that introduced so many people to the PIC programs. When that was changed with WIA, that’s where the greatest community voice was heard...we lost ground when that was taken away.”

Other: One respondent commented that a real problem with the current system is that the federal government does not play a large enough collaborative role, coordinating services at the federal level. Another remarked that one of the worst things about the current system is that the incentives are all on performance and not on collaboration.

“Our measure of success shouldn’t be just whether we met program enrollment goals, but rather whether we’re able to change the way education, business, labor, youth advocates and workforce intermediaries relate to one another and find greater ways to leverage resources.”

One Thing to Change at the Local Level

If you could change one thing about the operation of youth-related programs and services in your area, what would it be?

N	One thing to change in the local area
5	More integration/coordination of services
2	Increase employment and training services
2	Separate summer youth program
2	Looking for local ways to increase funding
2	Other

Several respondents again answered with how they would like to change the larger system, with respondents for six LYCs discussed performance, eligibility and spending requirements while respondents for 3 LYCs discussed the need for more funding. This reduced the number of answers in which respondents actually addressed a changes to be made in their local areas.

Respondents for five LYCs mentioned they would like to see more integration of and coordination between youth service providers at all levels within their local community whether this pertained to contracted service providers or youth serving agencies. They emphasized streamlining these programs and increasing the efficiency of the overall local level system.

“I think that there needs to be a higher degree of service integration... We are all touching some of the same youth in the local area and we haven’t really thought deeply about how to blend services.”

Respondents for two LYCs mentioned increasing employment and training services and respondents for two other LYCs mentioned trying to create some kind of summer youth program.

In addition to those discussing more funding generally, respondents for two LYCs discussed how they would like to see more funding made available to local youth either by tapping into local sources or by reducing administrative overhead.

Finally two other items mentioned by respondents about what they would like to see in their local areas include:

- Remembering that local areas can be flexible and creative and don’t need to simply implement programs in a bureaucratic fashion.
- Getting more youth and more parents of non-WIA eligible youth involved in the planning and policy-making process.

Sources of Best Ideas and Information for Program Improvement

Which other Youth Councils or organizations do you consider to be the best source of ideas and information for improving your programs? Why?

Overall, respondents shared several different local, state and national organizations they’ve looked to for insight into improving their programs. Most were enthusiastic about the process noting “I do a lot of research,” or that “we listen to see if something makes sense and if it fits in to where our strategic goals are, we will follow them.” Respondents for three LYCs did qualify their answers, however, noting that, “You can’t take one system and place it in another and expect it to have the same success level because there’s different parameters.”

Respondents for five LYCs mentioned a number of resources they like to turn to that are within their local workforce investment areas. For example, they discussed the valuable program practices they gleaned from other county level agencies such as the County office of education, the probation departments, the school districts, and other county social service offices. Respondents also discussed turning to the service providers and various groups within their own

county that deal with youth. For example, one respondent noted that “we ask [service providers in the area] to come up with ideas and they do. Sometimes we implement them and they become standardized.”

Another important resource respondents mentioned were Youth Councils in areas immediately surrounding their own. Respondents for 6 LYCs discussed the importance of being able to speak with LYCs immediately nearby because they often shared many of the same characteristics (e.g. rural/urban) and therefore were confronted by many of the same problems. Staff for these LYCs noted their close connection and frequent communication with these other staff.

State-level resources also proved valuable. Respondents of ten LYCs listed state-level consulting and technical assistance programs such as:

- The Youth Council Institute
- New Ways to Work
- The California Workforce Association
- Larry Robin and Associates

Respondents for nine LYCs also mentioned specific Youth Councils from around the State that had particularly promising programs they that were presently investigating or had borrowed from in the past.

Finally, a few respondents discussed national level sources of information. Respondents for three LYCs turned to LYCs in other parts of the country for various unique and inventive programs. Respondents for 4 LYCs mentioned various national organizations or networks that research and develop policy and best practices for youth. Some examples include:

- The National Youth Employment Coalition
- The American Youth Policy Forum
- The Star Levitan Group out of Rutgers University
- Casey Family Programs
- The PEPnet website

Final Comments

Is there anything we haven't asked that you feel we should know to get a better picture of your Youth Council?

Respondents typically did not have that much to add. Respondents for five LYCs did emphasize some aspect of their membership such as their experience, diversity and enthusiasm for working on youth programs. Respondents for two LYCs provided further information about their local area, which they thought might be useful for putting other answers in context.

Lastly, a few respondents provided some final words regarding the uncertain future of WIA programs. Respondents for two LYCs emphasized that the State should not try to play a more regulatory role and that local areas should maintain their local control. Respondent(s) for one other LYC specifically noted that their LYC had already decided that it was committed to continue even if LYCs became non-mandatory under reauthorization of WIA.